United Nations A/62/PV.22

General Assembly

Sixty-second session

Official Records

22nd plenary meeting
Tuesday, 9 October 2007, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Mavroyiannis ..... (Cyprus)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Mavroyiannis (Cyprus), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 109 (*continued*)

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/62/1)

Mrs. Asmady (Indonesia): Let me begin by thanking the Secretary-General for his first report on the work of the Organization (A/62/1). We very much value his overview of what was accomplished over the past year and his highlighting of the various factors that need to be addressed in the future. This is an extremely important report for my delegation, as Indonesia has always stood for a robust United Nations that plays a central role in international affairs.

The report comes at a critical juncture in the history of the United Nations, not least because of the change at its helm. It would not be wrong to say that the world is going through a period of turbulence and uncertainty. Climate change, geopolitical upheaval, uneven progress in the economic and social fields and large pockets of persistent poverty globally are some of the crucial challenges confronting peoples of the world. We will tackle these issues effectively only if the international community reaffirms its commitment to the multilateral approach and if it does so from the most credible world platform available to the community, the United Nations.

But merely highlighting the stature of the Organization is not sufficient. All Member countries must show through their actions that they recognize the primacy of the United Nations in solving global challenges, and fully support its organizational requirements and its aims.

While we instinctively associate the United Nations with world peace and security, we would do just as well to associate it with development. Development is, to a large extent, a prerequisite for peace and security. That is why we must not subordinate the development role of the United Nations to any other it has to play on the world stage. That means that the development agenda of the United Nations, and in particular the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), must be accorded priority and carefully attended to in order to win and keep the peace.

This being 2007, we are at the halfway point of the period set for the achievement of the MDGs. Yet the results have been less than spectacular overall. Those who most desperately need to achieve the MDGs find themselves still unable to do so. In contrast to the bright spots of Asia, the situation remains dire in sub-Saharan Africa. There, several countries are not on track to achieving a single MDG. In many developing countries, particularly in their rural regions, people weather the vicissitudes of poverty every day. Their plight is being worsened by the impact of climate change. The Secretary-General does not mince words on this matter: "The Millennium Development Goals and the other internationally agreed development goals

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cannot be achieved... if we do not tackle climate change" (*A/62/1, para. 11*).

In response to that, Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono recently echoed that sentiment while addressing the General Assembly. On global warming, he said that "we are much more interdependent than we thought in terms of the causes, symptoms and solutions" and that there was "the need for urgency, which means the need for action and the need to think outside the box" (*A/62/PV.5, p. 23*).

As a high-risk nation and the venue for the thirteenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, Indonesia attaches great importance to this issue. We expect that the Bali Conference, which will be held in December, will set the stage for the establishment of a global partnership to address climate change. Out of it should emerge concrete actions and rationalized targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions after the Kyoto Protocol expires, in 2012.

Even as developing countries build the capacity to deal with climate change, they must not ignore other aspects of capacity-building that are crucial for their development. Enlightened self-interest must cause them to practice good governance and respect for the rule of law and human rights. In all of that, national efforts must be reinforced by international support, especially from the donor community. Global partnerships are also required.

The success of global partnerships will hinge on the necessary political will. In concrete terms, they must lead to the fulfilment of international commitments. Instead of decreasing, as it did last year, official development assistance should increase. So too should foreign direct investment, which has so far shown itself partial to only a few select emerging economies.

The time has now come for the Doha Development Round to live up to the expectations of the developing world. Distorting subsidies, limited market access and the need for special and differentiated treatment must be tackled urgently.

In order to be able to make effective interventions to resolve those matters, the United Nations must be strengthened through comprehensive reform. It must become the fulcrum to realize a just and equitable world order. While we note meaningful progress on some fronts, the capacity of the United Nations must be further enhanced to address the global challenges of the twenty-first century that lie before it. The reform process must impact all organs of the Organization in order to maintain the proper balance among them in accordance with the vision of the Charter.

My delegation has long believed that the General Assembly, as the highest deliberative and decision-making organ of the United Nations, should embody the fullness of its capability. The General Assembly must exercise the full authority granted to it under the Charter of the United Nations and the Security Council must be adapted to reflect current geopolitical realities.

In that context, no opportunity should be lost to move forward the global agenda on the issues of disarmament and non-proliferation. As highlighted in the report of the Secretary-General, "The quest for a more peaceful and secure world is one of the main pillars of the work of the Organization" (*para. 42*).

The absence of consensus for action on those two challenges should be a cause for deep concern by all. An important first step should be to free the Conference on Disarmament from its paralysis. Likewise, the restructuring of the Secretariat in the disarmament field is very important. We are confident that under the direct supervision of the Secretary-General, the Office for Disarmament Affairs could be made more effective in achieving its mandate.

Until there is the total elimination of nuclear weapons, Indonesia remains firmly convinced that non-nuclear-weapon States should be assured that such weapons will not be used in any situation of conflict. While the Secretary-General has reflected on the three issues to be negotiated within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament, the issue of negative security assurances has not attracted much attention. That matter should not be overlooked.

In fighting terrorism, our view is that that international scourge is best tackled from the roots up. More will be needed than the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which was adopted last year as resolution 60/288, to decisively overcome that problem. We must redouble our efforts to settle outstanding issues linked to the draft comprehensive

convention on international terrorism, which is long overdue.

The Secretary-General's report also shines the spotlight on various conflicts in the world that deserve international attention. We welcome the greater use of the Office of the Secretary-General in the resolution of such disputes. We expect that the standing team of mediation specialists will effectively supplement the work of the Secretary-General in that area. We hope that, with the involvement of all the parties concerned, further action will be taken to find concrete solutions to festering global conflicts, particularly those in the Middle East and Africa. Certainly, the engagement and the costs required to defuse potential hostilities before war actually erupts will be much less than after was occurs.

In the face of protracted conflicts, we find there is an ever-increasing demand for United Nations peacekeepers. That surge in peacekeeping demands is unprecedented, with the trend likely to continue for some time. In terms of United Nations peacekeeping, Indonesia has a proud tradition of participation going back to 1957. We will in fact be contributing a police unit for the Hybrid Operation in Darfur. Last year, in response to the conflict in south Lebanon, we were one of the first countries that offered to reinforce the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon. The capacity of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in the field and at Headquarters needs to be enhanced, with the strongest possible support for peacekeeping missions.

In handling that mandate, we are convinced that the agreed basic principles of peacekeeping — consent of the parties, impartiality and non-use of force except in self-defence and in the defence of the authorized mandate — are essential to both the safety and the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations.

As a member of the Peacebuilding Commission, we are particularly pleased that the Commission quickly came of age during the first year of its operation by considering two country cases. The task before us is to translate the Commission's commitment into tangible measures on the ground.

In the sphere of the promotion of basic human rights, we are pleased to learn of the Human Rights Council's establishment of the Universal Periodic Review Mechanism. This is an innovative mechanism which my delegation believes will contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights on a basis of equality. It will serve to minimize the politicization of human rights and the use of double standards in evaluations, as we experience now. We look forward to the early operationalization of the mechanism as it begins its work next year. This will be a significant milestone for the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

However, we should be duly cautious when dealing with the report's support for the concept of the responsibility to protect, on which we decided during the 2005 Summit. We continue to believe that, in practice, this will contravene the principle of the equality of States in international relations. We firmly believe no pretext should be created for interference in the internal affairs of sovereign States.

In conclusion, Indonesia reiterates its full support for and willingness to cooperate with all those who endeavour to promote multilateralism. We view multilateralism as our shield against injustice and disrespect in international relations and as our most valuable tool to build a better world.

Mr. Zinsou (Benin) (*spoke in French*): Let me express my delegation's great appreciation to the Secretary-General for the exhaustive report on the work of the Organization during the first year of his mandate (A/62/1). Whoever reads the report will attest that the Secretary-General understands well the peoples' expectations of the United Nations and the Organization's major responsibility in multilateral cooperation for finding appropriate solutions to the many global challenges that humanity confronts.

The Secretary-General is fully aware of the need to produce results commensurate with the problems that need to be resolved. He has also developed an acute sense of the urgency of the action required. My delegation would like to reiterate here our trust in him and in his entire team, and our firm support.

An old African saying tells us that we should use the end of the old rope to weave the new. The Secretary-General can be proud of having been able to build on what has been achieved in the reforms launched in 2005 by the Member States convened here at the highest level by his predecessor, Mr. Kofi Annan, to whom my delegation would like to pay a resounding tribute.

The report of the Secretary-General clearly identifies the most promising areas for measurable results and focuses our attention on the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), particularly in Africa, where the forecasts are the most alarming vis-à-vis the established timelines.

We share his determination to move forward. However long the road to attaining the goals in Africa may seem, we can get there if we resolutely reject defeatism and identify the short cuts which can get us to our goals. It is fortunate that the United Nations has clearly defined its own role, in particular, in the dissemination of methods and procedures that have proven themselves elsewhere in similar situations, and in mobilizing the resources needed for their large-scale application in making strides against extreme poverty.

The Millennium Villages have proven their worth, but they should not be something only for the happy chosen few. The Secretary-General has put his finger on the heart of the problem in this regard: the need to mobilize the necessary resources to extend them to the two score countries in Africa which are ready to be a part of the initiative.

Like the Secretary-General, my delegation urgently appeals to the international community to make an increased effort of solidarity. We need to wake up dormant local capacities so that the underprivileged can become agents in the sustainable improvement of their living conditions.

In the same spirit, we thank the Secretary-General for having underscored here the expected benefits of improved integration of African countries in international trade through the suppression of the agricultural subsidies which prevent them from exploiting their comparative advantages on the international market and thus from attaining prosperity. But they have to be freed from fratricidal conflicts, which can be prevented through better governance of our societies, fairer distribution of national income and greater respect for different identities and minorities.

We need also to take account of an inescapable reality, climate change, which poses such a major challenge for Africa. Unless it is included in our planning for Africa, climate change can undermine the accomplishments we have already achieved in our work towards the MDGs. All aspects of the issue need to be looked at. Forecasting and prevention have to be the key words here: forecasting, to help African countries amass the vital stocks they need to mitigate the impact of natural disasters; and prevention, at least to limit their effects by building the necessary infrastructure.

In this regard, the Benin Government is planning to construct an embankment along the coast to protect it from ongoing coastal erosion, which is swallowing up territory day after day. This obviously means a high level of investment which is beyond the capacity of resource mobilization at the national level. Nonetheless, such resources are indispensable.

Turning to issues of peace and security, the efforts under way on the African continent, with the help of the United Nations, are certainly laudable, because strengthening the mechanisms established in Africa is of vital importance. I would like to echo the appeal to the Security Council issued several days ago by the Chairperson of the African Union Commission in favour of a creative re-reading of Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. We look forward to the Secretary-General's report on this question.

In the view of my delegation, the situation is simple: Africa would like to take its place in the collective security system instituted by the Charter. It is asking for that, within a partnership based on a balanced allocation of roles. We are counting on the Secretary-General to promote this partnership, in a spirit of faithfulness to the Charter and in the quest for efficiency with the pragmatism that is appropriate when saving human lives. We are happy to note that these criteria have indeed prevailed in the way in which the issue of Darfur has been treated.

Similarly, we welcome the efforts deployed by the Secretary-General in order to strengthen the capacities of the United Nations in the area of mediation, preventive diplomacy and restoring peace.

In the course of these recent years, it has become obvious that the United Nations must review its policy in the area of response to complex crises. The necessity of rapid troop deployment means that forces have to be available and that they have to be well trained and well equipped if they are to participate effectively in stabilization operations.

It is fortunate that developed countries are becoming increasingly involved at the operational level, as in the deployment of the European Union in Chad and the Central African Republic. This helps to

make up for weaknesses in the capacities of developing countries' armies, which, until recently, shouldered most of the responsibility of the international community in Africa.

When it comes to peacebuilding, we think that all countries that emerge from a conflict should be eligible for the interventions of the Peacebuilding Commission, which should come up with a true Marshall Plan for such countries. The strategic frameworks of such interventions should aim at sustainable financing, among other things, by creating matching funds that multiply tenfold the impact of the contributions already mobilized. It must be emphasized that these contributions remain relatively modest.

The adoption by consensus of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy was a true turning point in mobilizing Member States against the scourge of terrorism, which is to be condemned in all its manifestations. In this regard, my country participated actively in the Vienna symposium in May 2007 in order to promote the implementation of this global strategy through an integrated approach.

We are convinced that this approach will provide us with results only if it strengthens the capacity of States to fulfil their sovereign functions from the viewpoint of protecting human lives and goods and exercising effective control over the territory under their jurisdiction, as well as promoting the necessary stability to ensure balanced economic and social development.

With respect to disarmament and non-proliferation, the Secretary-General has showed what his preferences are, and we have followed suit, counting on him to bring those States that are key actors in this area to show consistency in their efforts to strengthen international peace and security. No effort should be spared to make sure that the logic of peace prevails in their relations. We pay tribute to the Secretary-General for the positive signals that seem to be appearing in this area.

All of humankind stands to benefit both from specific initiatives to reduce the level of military spending and from the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, whose potential to cause harm is well known to us.

The Secretary-General rightly underscores the affirmation of the responsibility to protect as a new international standard compatible with the Charter of the United Nations, which the international community should stand ready to exercise in the service of human dignity, just as it has deployed efforts to establish the authority of institutions of international criminal justice. We are calling for more frequent recourse to international justice and, in particular, to the International Criminal Court. The international community must take full advantage of the deterrent capacity of the Court in respect of crimes within the Court's jurisdiction.

It would be desirable that it also contribute, as a secondary effect, to the enhancement of the respect for human rights as a set of universal values that maintain their applicability everywhere. In this regard, cultural diversity, which is a positive good, being a framework for the expression of identities that represent the richness of humanity, should not be used as a pretext to perpetuate practices that belong in the past and are deeply offensive to our collective conscience.

My delegation firmly supports the principle of unity of action in emergency situations. This principle will be of value only if there is integrated coordination that takes advantage of synergies in the field in order to be more effective in protecting victims and afflicted persons.

We are confident that the clear-sightedness of the Secretary-General will guide Member States in the implementation of their reforms for greater coherence. We thus adhere to the recommendations of the High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence in order to strengthen the Organization's ability to act in the service of its mission. We have to redouble our efforts to make sure that the institutional reform moves forward, especially the expansion of the Security Council in both categories of members. In accordance with the Ezulwini Consensus, my delegation is asking for two permanent seats for Africa and two non-permanent seats, to enable the architecture of peace and security on the continent to be integrated harmoniously in the collective security architecture set up by the Charter.

In conclusion, my delegation thinks that a revitalized General Assembly is an enterprising General Assembly that fully shoulders its responsibilities and prerogatives vis-à-vis other bodies

and is supported by Secretariat that performs at the very top of its abilities.

Mr. Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly is concluding this morning the review of the first annual report on the work of the Organization that the Secretary-General, since his election, presented to us, in accordance with Article 98 of the Charter.

My delegation believes that it is a solid and informative report. It is excellent in two ways. First, it is a document that has the merit of emphasizing the irreplaceable role of the United Nations for humanity, as it seeks suitable responses to the many problems with which it is confronted, in particular, with regard to peace and security, development and human rights, and climate change. The response to all these challenges cannot be undertaken unilaterally or by a group of States. The report is also excellent because it points to the ways and means to meet these challenges. For us, it will serve as a compass. I would like to mention, in particular, some of these challenges by which the value of our commitments and the degree of our political will, so often affirmed and reaffirmed, will be judged.

First, there is the thorny question of attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The fact, unfortunately, is that most developing countries may not attain them by 2015 because poverty continues to increase, particularly in rural areas. Investments for health and education are in significant decline. We are still awaiting the great increase in official development assistance (ODA) which was meant to support the efforts of developing countries.

The situation of Africa is of particular concern. One must wonder what happened to the solemn commitments undertaken by heads of State, both at the Millennium Summit and at the 2005 World Summit, to respond to Africa's special needs. Seven years away from 2015, we must once again urgently appeal to the international community, in particular to the donor countries, to keep the commitments they have made in various international forums regarding official development assistance.

In this respect, we have been assured that the Secretary-General will not delay in strengthening the Office of his Special Adviser on Africa. That Office provides impetus for present and future action to respond to the special needs of Africa and consolidates all the various initiatives for that purpose. We will return to that question later, but I think we should emphasize the importance of this Office. This post of Adviser is in line with the dynamic of creating administrative Secretariat structures and their budget lines in order to support, as required, specific programmes of activities set out in the medium-term plan or the programme plan.

In that respect we would like to recall again that at the September 2005 World Summit heads of State or Government, in follow-up to the Millennium Declaration, adopted a series of special measures linked to the specific needs of Africa, which continues to be one of the Organization's main priorities. We believe that we should continue to address this priority separately at a very high level in accordance with the will and political decisions of heads of State at the Millennium Summit and at the 2005 World Summit.

As an operational structure, the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Africa is responsible for mobilizing public opinion in the world so that the continent will remain at the top of the international agenda. Furthermore, the Office is, in a way, a coordinator and overall monitor. It assembles in an annual report the contributions of United Nations bodies regarding the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and it proposes the strategic direction of those reports. It also actively follows the synergies developed in the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) process, the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, the Group of Eight (G-8) and more recently with countries such as India, the Republic of Korea and Brazil with a view to a partnership aimed at greater development of Africa.

In other words, the Office has multiple functions, some of which come from the former Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries, the previous focal point in the Office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation in the 1980s. Others still are new and constantly evolving without being entirely in line with the dynamic of the least developed countries and other categories of developing countries, which are the object of completely different special global or regional programmes and processes.

With all those responsibilities, we believe that the Office should retain all due importance, while maintaining its integrity and gaining new vitality

through strengthened financial and human resources, an improved programme structure and, in particular, the appointment of a new Adviser without further delay. That is the recommendation of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) in their respective annual reports. It is also an urgent request of the African Group.

We were reassured to hear the Secretary-General, as he started his mandate, affirm that he attached great priority to Africa in his agenda. We were also reassured to note that that priority figured in the decisions taken during the first 12 months of his mandate. We are convinced that he will not delay in following up the recommendations of CPC and ACABQ and, as I said earlier, the insistent request of the African Group. We will return to this in due course when we consider the question of cooperation between the United Nations and Africa, in particular NEPAD.

The second challenge I wish to mention concerns climate change. In that respect, we wish to commend the President's initiative to make climate change an essential theme of our work. We welcome the fact that the high-level event on 24 September 2007 reflected global consensus on the need for urgent action to preserve planet Earth. We continue to believe that the Kyoto Protocol is a relevant instrument towards a genuine reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, and we hope that the December 2007 Bali Conference will trigger a process leading to a post-2012 climate agreement.

The urgency of action on climate change is greater. Global warming has much more devastating effects in developing countries, because they are less well equipped to deal with it. Thus, millions of lives are threatened by floods, and meagre development efforts are laid waste by the encroachment of deserts. This is an area that demands concrete, immediate and concerted action by the international community.

The third challenge concerns peace and security, which the report addresses at length. Here, we wish to commend the Organization's conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities. In that context, Africa intends to gradually increase its contributions to peacekeeping forces. That is why, in addition to the two institutions that train experienced units, in Ghana and Mali, my country, with the support of donor States, has been urged to establish an institution to train international police and security personnel for African States wishing to contribute to United Nations or African Union peacekeeping forces. We will have an opportunity to learn a bit more about that at the donor conference for such a school, to be held at United Nations Headquarters on 22 October 2007. Naturally, we are counting on active participation by all Member States.

My country welcomes the Secretary-General's bold reforms of structures responsible for peace and security issues. Likewise, we welcome the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which will be an important instrument in the fight against that phenomenon. It is up to all Member States to demonstrate their goodwill so that the long-awaited comprehensive convention on international terrorism can be finalized.

Strengthening the Organization — the ultimate goal of the reform projects under discussion — is clearly necessary, because the challenges to be met are great and complex. We continue to believe that strengthening the authority of the General Assembly must be among the essential components of United Nations reform. Furthermore, the Security Council needs to be changed in its structure and its functioning — changes that would take into account the new configuration of the world.

It is in this spirit that Africa has demonstrated cooperation, understanding and transparency. Indeed, we have issued a set of proposals to the world, contained in what has come to be called the Ezulwini Consensus, which was published as a working document of our organization. In that document, our continent suggests increasing the number of seats in both membership categories. Our continent also suggests allocating two permanent seats for Africa, with the right of veto. We are still waiting for a positive response from other regions. In particular, we are awaiting such a response because we believe that Africa's proposals and suggestions are extremely appropriate. In fact, ours is the only continent not to have a permanent seat on the Security Council.

Not long ago, we inaugurated a new tool for promoting and protecting human rights throughout the world. As members may have guessed, it is the Human Rights Council. It is highly desirable to avoid the errors and equivocations observed in the functioning of the Commission on Human Rights. We are thinking in

particular of the politicization and selectivity that ultimately discredited the former Commission.

Referring to human rights leads me to touch once again upon the need to create a community that accepts its diversity and fosters tolerance. Indeed, if civilizations have often clashed throughout history, they have always ultimately agreed to organize a dynamic of peaceful existence in order to ensure their survival. Either the world will be rich in its diversity of cultures and civilizations or it will cease to exist.

In addition to its necessary reform, the effectiveness of our Organization also depends on its cooperation with regional organizations to maintain peace and security and to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and sustainable development. Here, we welcome the innovations that the Secretary-General has proposed to that end. In the same spirit, Central Africa remains very intent in its request for a permanent presence of the Secretariat in our subregion, through the establishment of a Central African office headed by an Under-Secretary-General.

In conclusion, the delegation of Cameroon wishes once again to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his excellent report, as well as its support for his plan to reform the Organization and his intention to strengthen constructive cooperation between the General Assembly and the Secretariat so as to ensure more effective functioning of the United Nations.

The Acting President: I now call on the observer of the Observer State of the Holy See.

Archbishop Migliore (Holy See): At the outset, my delegation thanks the Secretary-General for his first comprehensive report (A/62/1). We look forward to working with him and with the membership to make the United Nations ever more responsive to the needs of all people.

As we reach the halfway point in the process of achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the time is ripe to take stock of our successes and failures. Still today, almost 10 million children under 5 years old die each year, mostly from preventable causes. Too many mothers die in childbirth from preventable and treatable complications. Last year, 2.9 million people died of HIV/AIDS-related causes, and half of the developing world lacks even basic sanitation.

The global community seems to have been losing focus on the need to ensure that everyone enjoys the right to basic health care. Although studies show that simple medical prevention is often one of the most cost-effective and successful ways of improving the health and stability of society, primary care is often neglected or replaced by more selective, and even culturally divisive, methods of health care. Focusing on the whole range of basic health care will surely make a substantial contribution towards the achievement of the MDGs and a saner health policy.

Such a sad landscape is made bleaker by the fact that, as children die and generations lack even the basic necessities of life, we have continued to drift towards mutual and global destruction. The annual military expenditures of well over one trillion dollars, the talent and resources devoted to types of technology that destroy lives and our planet and the persistence of the misplaced trust in the law of force rather than in the force of law are just some examples of actions that are contrary to goodness and human reason. To prevent that situation from worsening, the United Nations, with the cooperation of all Member States, must renew its commitment to the preservation of life at every level and in every corner of the world.

It is nevertheless encouraging to note recent findings indicating some real progress in achieving the MDGs. It is only right to recognize the efforts of those countries that have contributed to the gains made. Now, greater attention must be paid to those States that still trail the rest of the developing world. In order to encourage both public and private investment and to create a favourable economic and social climate, peace and security and the rule of law should underpin reform efforts.

The United Nations is increasingly being called upon to respond to multifarious challenges around the world. To meet this ever-growing need for humanitarian assistance, the United Nations should continue to work to promote partnerships with civil society that create a predictable and reactive humanitarian response. Member States play an important role in addressing humanitarian crises. By giving safe and unhindered access to humanitarian workers, they not only fulfil their responsibility to protect, but also help ensure that those who suffer from a humanitarian tragedy are not re-victimized.

During the last few years, the Organization has dealt with issues related to culture and religion in an increasing number of resolutions, meetings and side events. That aspect is unfortunately omitted in the report. Most often, it is only when tensions and conflict emerge that Governments and international organizations call on religious and cultural forces to help establish dialogue between parties. Cooperating in programmes against incitement to hatred, witnessing for peace and against violence and peacemaking through faith-based agencies are among the many things religious communities and their leaders can do to end conflict and to build conditions for peace.

My delegation commends the United Nations commitment to addressing the many challenges facing development, peace and security and human rights. In so doing, the Organization must maintain its transparency and accountability to the decisions of the Member States. To that end, modifications to the Millennium Development Goals, including the creation of new targets, as referred to in Annex II, need to be undertaken in an open manner rather than as a result of executive or administrative decisions.

Finally, it is our earnest desire that the sixty-second session of the General Assembly be strongly marked by a renewed sense of commitment and action towards not only achieving the Millennium Development Goals, but also to completely fulfilling the vision of hope of this institution.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the observer of Palestine.

Mr. Hijazi (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to express our thanks and appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations, for his report on the work of the Organization (A/62/1), which comes at a time when countries of the world look to the United Nations for progressive actions in facing challenging conditions, noting that the United Nations is the best universal instrument for collective efforts to face the challenges of our world.

The Palestinian delegation expresses its support for the ambitious plans to reform the Organization and to strengthen constructive cooperation between the General Assembly and the Secretariat in the context of transparency, confidence. We seek a more vital role for the Organization in the field of disarmament and other spheres and note the central role played by the Secretary-General in conducting the Dialogue among Civilizations and the High-level Dialogue on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace, and his continued efforts to improve the Organization.

The Palestinian people also look to the United Nations to help them end their tragedy and find a comprehensive and lasting solution to their problem, which is as old as the Organization and which is closely related to it. This Organization, as a peace organization, has assumed the major responsible role concerning that question pending its comprehensive solution.

The United Nations plays a major role in dealing with the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem. United Nations resolutions are the legal and fundamental references for solving the Palestinian question and for the peace process in the Middle East. The United Nations is also a member of the Quartet, which is seeking to find a just and comprehensive international solution to the Palestinian question.

The United Nations organs and agencies, notably the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), have a basic and important role in supporting and assisting the Palestinian people to overcome their humanitarian plight. The United Nations has adopted many resolutions and decisions that emphasize the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the duty to protect them.

There is international consensus on the dangers to international peace and security as a result of the continued absence of a just and lasting solution to the Palestinian question, especially to the stability of the Middle East region. Continued Israeli occupation of Palestinian land, which has now lasted more than 40 years, the refugee problem, which has lasted more than 60 years, continued violation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people by the occupying Power and the failure of the international community to relieve the suffering of the Palestinians, are true, moral and serious challenge to all of the principles and rules on which the Organization was founded.

The issues dealt with in the report include the Millennium Development Goals, climate change, sustainable development, conflict prevention, peace and peacekeeping, human rights, the rule of law and

humanitarian affairs, all of which are unavailable in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, because of the foreign occupation and its illegal practices. Yet, the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization does not deal with the question in a suitable manner within the context of the role and responsibilities of the United Nations. In that context, we wish to emphasize the following.

First, the Palestinian question is the most longstanding issue without a solution on the United Nations agenda. The responsibility of the United Nations towards this question is ongoing and, until such time that it is solved in all its aspects, the credibility of this Organization will be jeopardized.

Secondly, the Palestinian question is of special importance as regards human rights issues in the world, as was emphasized by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, Mr. John Dugard. The issue of human rights in Palestine has been on the United Nations agenda for 60 years. It is a real test for the United Nations, a test of the Organization's degree of commitment to protecting human rights in Palestine. If the United Nations and the international community fail to put an end to the violations to which the Palestinian people are subjected, the international movement for human rights — which is considered a major accomplishment of humanity during the past 60 years — faces a grave danger.

Thirdly, in this context, we would like to emphasize the need to strengthen the role of the Organization in maintaining and protecting international law, especially the Fourth Geneva Convention, relative to the protection of civilians during times of war, which is a basic principle underlying the responsibility to protect.

Fourthly, we emphasize the importance of strengthening the role of the Human Rights Council and respect for and implementation of its resolutions in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251, which established the Council, and with the Charter.

In conclusion, the delegation of Palestine reiterates its thanks and gratitude to the Secretary-General for his valuable report. We wish to assure him of our support for his efforts to promote human rights, to uphold international law, to bring justice and freedom to all peoples of the world, especially to those who are still under occupation.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker on the debate on this agenda item. May I take it that the Assembly takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization contained in document A/62/1?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 109.

Agenda item 114

Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

(h) Appointment of members of the Joint Inspection Unit

Note by the Secretary-General (A/62/174)

The Acting President: As indicated in document A/62/174, on 11 July 2007, Inspector Juan Luis Larrabure of Peru submitted his resignation to the Chairperson of the Joint Inspection Unit, effective 30 September 2007. Inspector Larrabure was appointed by the General Assembly on 6 June 2003 for a five-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2004 and expiring on 31 December 2008. In accordance with article 4, paragraph 5 of the statute of the Joint Inspection Unit, the Chairperson notified the Secretary-General on 11 July 2007 of the vacancy and of her decision to waive the requirement of six months notice stipulated in article 4, paragraph 3 of the statute. As a result of the resignation of Inspector Juan-Luis Larrabure of Peru, the General Assembly is required, during the sixty-second session, to appoint a member to fill the vacancy in the Joint Inspection Unit.

It is further stated in the note of the Secretary-General that, in order for consultations to be held as stipulated in article 3, and to align the term of office with those of the other Inspectors, the Assembly may wish to consider filling the vacancy for the term of office beginning on 1 January 2008 and expiring on 31 December 2012.

In this connection, may I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to fill this vacancy for a term of office beginning on 1 January 2008 and expiring on 31 December 2012?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: As also indicated in document A/62/174, in accordance with article 3, paragraph 1 of the statute of the Joint Inspection Unit, the President of the General Assembly shall consult with Member States to draw up a list of countries — in this case, one country — which would be requested to propose a candidate for appointment to the Joint Inspection Unit. After holding the necessary consultations, I should like to communicate to the Assembly the information received from the Chairman of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States that Peru has been endorsed to propose a candidate for the vacancy from among the Latin American and Caribbean States.

In accordance with article 3, paragraph 1 of the statute of Joint Inspection Unit, Peru will therefore be requested to submit the name of a candidate and the curriculum vitae highlighting the candidate's relevant qualifications for the task ahead. After holding the appropriate consultations described in article 3, paragraph *2* or the statute of the Joint Inspection Unit, including consultations with the President of the Economic and Social Council and with the Secretary-General in his capacity as Chairman of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, I will propose a qualified candidate to the Assembly for appointment to the Joint Inspection Unit for a period beginning on 1 January 2008 and expiring on 31 December 2012.

We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of sub-item (h) of agenda item 114. I thank delegates for their cooperation.

The meeting rose at 11.20 a.m.

United Nations A/62/PV.23

General Assembly
Sixty-second session

Official Records

23rd plenary meeting
Wednesday, 10 October 2007, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kerim ..... (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda items 10 and 110

Report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/62/137)

Report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/62/138)

The President: The 2005 United Nations World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1) called on the General Assembly and the Security Council to create new institutional mechanisms for strengthening the capacity of the United Nations to support countries emerging from conflict. As a result, the Peacebuilding Commission, the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund were established. Those innovative achievements represent the most significant outcomes of the Summit to date. Therefore, it gives me great pleasure to open the first joint debate to review the annual report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/62/137) and the report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/62/138).

Over the past two decades, the United Nations has been at the centre of expanding peacebuilding activities in all parts of the world, including my own region, South-Eastern Europe. The United Nations has a unique comparative advantage in addressing the huge challenges faced by countries emerging from conflict. The demand for our peacebuilding operations and capacities is obviously set for growth.

The evidence shows that half of the countries emerging from conflict will relapse into violence within five years. To break that vicious circle, it is critical that the international community provide sustained practical support and resources to assist national efforts.

There is feedback between peace and stability, on the one hand, and economic development, human rights and the rule of law, on the other. The Peacebuilding Commission has a critical role to play in balancing both sides of that equation and in accelerating post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery. In addition to that substantive operational role, the Commission coordinates international efforts, marshals donor resources and focuses the attention of global opinion on peacebuilding issues. We all have a duty to ensure that the Peacebuilding Commission works well and that the decision to create it is translated into practical action aimed at promoting the well-being of millions of people trapped in post-conflict situations.

I believe that the Commission has now firmly established itself; it has made a good start. However, that is just the beginning of a longer process. Given the organizational complexity of the Commission, it is crucial that its coordination with all other United Nations organs and with other parts of the system be maintained in a balanced and proportionate manner. We also need to ensure that duplication is avoided.

The success of the Commission will clearly depend on cooperation from all of us to support its work — in particular, our full commitment to resolving the few remaining procedural hurdles, so that it can be fully effective. In that context, it is important to

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recognize that it has been operational for a little more than a year.

However, even during that short time, the Commission has brought a more coherent system-wide approach to peacebuilding and has strengthened the impact of the international community. We should learn from that example and apply what we have learned to the context of other areas in which we seek to improve the effectiveness of United Nations activities. I am confident that the Assembly will seize this opportunity to review and assess the work undertaken thus far by the Peacebuilding Commission and to provide it with a strategic vision of the way forward.

The two reports before us include thought-provoking recommendations and conclusions that the Assembly may wish to address. In particular, the Assembly may wish to reflect on the progress achieved by the Commission and the Fund in the two countries under their consideration, thus demonstrating our continued commitment to the peoples of both countries. In that regard, I look forward to the remarks to be made by the delegations of Burundi and Sierra Leone. Their views and experiences related to working with the Commission on the ground will be invaluable.

Looking ahead, the Commission should continue to refine its strategies in the countries under consideration, develop its advocacy role among all stakeholders engaged in peacebuilding activities and become more effective at marshalling resources. The Commission will also need to identify ways to improve coherence and synergies in its numerous activities in order to contribute to better peacebuilding policy and practice.

The main challenge now facing the Commission is to maximize its impact on the ground. In order to be as effective as possible, the United Nations peacebuilding architecture must be based on the principle of national ownership.

It is also critical that the $250 million funding target of the Peacebuilding Fund be met. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Her Excellency Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, President of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session, for her efforts to raise additional resources — with the support of the former Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission, Ambassador Gaspar Martins, Permanent Representative of Angola — and for her unique personal contribution to the Fund.

Going forward, I am sure that the membership will lend its full support and cooperation to the new Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission, Ambassador Takasu, Permanent Representative of Japan, in his efforts to strengthen the Commission and to fund the remaining $20 million shortfall in the Peacebuilding Fund.

I hope that our debate today will send a strong signal that we will reach out to meet the needs and aspirations of all peoples who have suffered the horrors of war. For the people in countries emerging from conflict, this Organization represents the best and only hope of attaining a more dignified life.

Therefore, the only relevant standard against which we can judge the success of the new peacebuilding architecture is by the practical results it achieves on the ground.

I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Japan, who is also the Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Mr. Takasu (Japan): First of all, on behalf of the members of the Peacebuilding Commission, allow me to express our heartfelt gratitude to you, Mr. President, for providing a timely opportunity to discuss the annual report of the Peacebuilding Commission.

In September 2005, our leaders adopted the 2005 World Summit Outcome, which explicitly emphasized the need for a "coordinated, coherent and integrated approach to post-conflict peacebuilding and reconciliation with a view to achieving sustainable peace" (A/res/60/1, para. 97). The document further states that the Commission was established "to bring together all relevant actors to marshal resources and to advise on and propose integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery" (*ibid, para. 98*).

With that in mind, let me briefly look back on the first year of the work of the Commission. The first annual report of the Peacebuilding Commission, as contained in document A/62/137, provides a detailed account of the work and activities of the Commission during the first year of its operation. The process of compiling the report reflected the seriousness with which the Commission's membership has undertaken its work and the significance it attaches to its anticipated contribution to peace consolidation and the

promotion of national ownership of peacebuilding measures in post-conflict situations. Here I would like to pay special tribute to Ambassador Martins of Angola for his dedication and leadership in steering the initial stage of the Commission.

In the course of approximately 50 formal and informal meetings and briefings held in various configurations, the Peacebuilding Commission addressed critical organizational, methodological and thematic issues, as well as country-specific issues relating to Burundi and Sierra Leone, coordinating various contributions to sustainable peace and opening avenues for mutual commitments between the international community and the countries under consideration. I believe that, in its first year, the Peacebuilding Commission contributed significantly to the promotion of integrated post-conflict peacebuilding strategies in Burundi and Sierra Leone.

In addition, the Peacebuilding Commission sought to accumulate best practices and lessons on critical peacebuilding issues. By establishing the Working Group on Lessons Learned, the Commission was able to benefit from existing experience in peace consolidation in many parts of the world.

As clearly underlined in its first annual report, the Peacebuilding Commission faced tremendous challenges during its initial phase involving establishing its organizational structures, defining its working methods and finding ways to fulfil its core mandates. Some of these challenges are likely to be the subject of additional discussion during the second session. The "Conclusions" part of the report contains serious reflection on key outstanding issues and challenges before the Commission, including the question of financing its field missions.

The United Nations peacebuilding architecture is now in place and the Peacebuilding Commission is entering its second year of activity. The Peacebuilding Commission's activities need to be carried out in a coherent manner. We believe that it may be appropriate for the Commission to begin addressing the addition of new countries for its consideration, in close consultation with the referring bodies.

Strengthening the Commission's relationship with relevant bodies and actors, such as the United Nations' principal organs, namely, the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the Secretariat, funds and programmes, regional and subregional organizations, international financial institutions and civil society, is essential. As part of such efforts, I, as this year's Chairman of the Commission, will devote constant efforts and avail myself of every opportunity to establish closer working relationships with those organizations.

Exploring thematic issues relevant to peacebuilding is also a matter of great importance. I am particularly convinced that discussing broad policy guidelines on peacebuilding activities in general, without focusing on a specific country, is also worth pursuing.

Raising awareness of the Commission's work, not only among relevant actors but also among the public at large, would greatly enhance the understanding of and necessary attention to the work of the Commission and the countries under its consideration. In this regard, we intend to make every effort to heighten the visibility of the Commission's work. At the same time, we would hope that individual Member States will join our efforts to promote the work of the Commission.

As Chairman of the Commission, I would like to assure all Members of our full dedication and commitment to the real success of the Commission, that is to say, making change in the field. In that spirit, we request all of you to lend your valuable and much needed support to our work at the Commission.

I would like to add just a few words in my capacity as Permanent Representative of Japan. Japan has provided very active support for the Peacebuilding Commission and the Fund. It coordinates its activities with those of the Commission. Recently, we sent high-level missions to Burundi and Sierra Leone, headed by then Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hamada, for the purpose of enhancing the peacebuilding process in those two countries, and a report on his visit to Sierra Leone was compiled for the Commission's forthcoming discussion. Japan shares the views of the Commission in its annual report with regard to the critical priority areas, and we have accordingly provided those countries with development assistance in fields such as basic infrastructure. Our activities have included the rehabilitation of power plants in Sierra Leone and community development in Burundi.

Japan accords high priorities to post-conflict peacebuilding efforts. Last month, the Japanese Government contributed to these efforts by launching a

new programme for training civilian peacebuilding professionals from Japan and also other Asian countries. The training takes place in Hiroshima and many other places in the world.

Japan will redouble its efforts to achieve the Commission's goal of building and consolidating sustainable peace by hosting the fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development and the G-8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit.

Mr. Salgueiro (Portugal): I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the European Union and the candidate countries of Turkey, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, as well as Ukraine, Georgia and Armenia, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, for organizing this important debate. The Peacebuilding Commission is a key achievement of the United Nations reform process. Created to address a gap in the United Nations system to support countries emerging from conflict, this new advisory body, together with the establishment of the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund, has provided an innovative institutional framework within which the Governments concerned, the international community and civil society have begun to address some key peacebuilding issues.

This was made possible thanks to the commitment of the previous Chairpersons of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission, Ambassador Ismael Gaspar Martins and Ambassador Kenzo Oshima, the two Vice-Chairpersons and the two Chairpersons of the country-specific configurations. The European Union would like to congratulate them for their valuable work and for the progress achieved under their leadership.

We would also like to congratulate Ambassador Yukio Takasu for his recent election as Chairperson of the Peacebuilding Commission and wish him all the success for his mandate. The European Union looks forward to the Commission having a real impact on the ground, including by bringing about greater coherence in international efforts to build peace.

The reports of both the Peacebuilding Commission (A/62/137) and the Peacebuilding Fund (A/62/138) submitted to the General Assembly stress that consolidation of peace must be based on national ownership and international partnership. The European Union agrees that efforts to consolidate peace and development must be based on the needs and perspectives of the affected countries themselves. Experience shows that a nationally owned and led process is the veritable key to success of peacebuilding and ultimately of sustainable peace. Experience equally shows that an inclusive and participatory peacebuilding process is the only way to ensure nationwide shared priority-setting and nation-building, a truthful correspondence between real needs and external assistance, and a sustained conformity between commitments and implementation.

In this sense, it is crucial to engage all stakeholders, including national civil society, the private sector, Governments, non-governmental organizations and current and potential donors. Close coordination between United Nations Headquarters and the national actors is essential in order to identify the most pressing priorities, such as good governance, youth empowerment, job creation, the promotion and protection of human rights, gender, rule of law and justice or security sector reform.

In order to ensure that peacebuilding efforts are sustainable, they should be monitored and tracked with quantitative and qualitative indicators at the strategic level to assess progress towards agreed goals, to take appropriate action when threats to peace arise, to enhance coherence of multidimensional efforts and to track fulfilment of mutual commitments by national and international actors. In this context, the Working Group on Lessons Learned should help the Peacebuilding Commission apply best practices to its work at the field level. Additionally, in order to maximize the Commission's positive impact on the ground, we believe that the link between Headquarters and the field should be strengthened. Where possible, representatives from the field should participate in the Commission's discussions in New York via video conference or in person, not just to brief the Commission, but also to engage in the assessment of progress and the detailing of next steps to be taken. In addition to existing coordination meetings, Commission meetings could also be held in-country so that more actors can be involved.

Another priority that would enable the Commission to consolidate its added value and maximize its impact would be to increase its visibility in the field through improved outreach and communication strategies as well as greater publicity. Also, we are of the opinion that the Peacebuilding Support Office needs to be equipped with the adequate resources necessary to continue to efficiently support the Commission's growing work.

The European Union welcomes the engagement that the Peacebuilding Commission has shown in Sierra Leone and Burundi in the past year. We commend the intensive work of all stakeholders that have contributed to the Strategic Framework for peacebuilding in Burundi and consider it a critical instrument providing guidance for the Government of Burundi, the Commission itself, and all partners for their common work in peacebuilding. We underline the importance of the monitoring and tracking mechanism that is currently being developed between Burundi and the Commission to allow for reviewing progress in peacebuilding activities and objectives on a regular basis. Without this mechanism, the Strategic Framework will not have much impact on the ground.

With regard to Sierra Leone, the European Union considers that the Peacebuilding Commission has made a valuable contribution to enhancing international attention and financial support and in aiding the overall peace consolidation process. The European Union stands ready to continue to assist in the finalization of the Sierra Leone Compact and in developing tools to track progress. The Commission should ensure that the peacebuilding process remains on track and that gaps are addressed in a timely and coherent manner. The European Union believes that the Compact should build on existing frameworks, such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, the Peace Consolidation Strategy and the frameworks of assistance of other main donors. We have to ensure the optimal articulation of these frameworks while highlighting national and international commitments and encouraging their implementation.

The fact that the monitoring and tracking mechanism of the Strategic Framework for peacebuilding in Burundi will be based to the extent possible on the monitoring mechanism and timelines of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper is an encouraging development in the right direction. In this context, the European Community, as a main multilateral donor in both Burundi and Sierra Leone, stands ready to work constructively towards this end at the strategic and field level.

The European Union recognizes the importance of sustained and predictable financing for peacebuilding. The Peacebuilding Fund, in operation since January 2007, plays a critical role in providing countries with start-up funding for early recovery. The European Union member States have been contributing to this Fund, and the Union is collectively its largest donor. It is important to ensure that additional countries are declared eligible for support from the Peacebuilding Fund and that mobilization of resources is enhanced in order to achieve the $250 million funding target and to effectively address the transition gap.

The European Union sees the Peacebuilding Fund as a catalyst for work on peacebuilding efforts, but long-term funding must still come from multilateral and bilateral donors. The scope of the Fund should not overlap with other existing instruments. In order to ensure broad and effective use of the Fund, all of its three funding windows should be fully utilized. The role of the Peacebuilding Fund Advisory Group can be particularly helpful in providing guidance on the effective use of the funds.

As recognized in both reports, it is crucial that the distinction between the Peacebuilding Fund and the Peacebuilding Commission is clarified for all the parties involved in peacebuilding from the outset of the process. We should further reflect on the interrelationship between the Commission and the Fund, in particular what the sequencing is between them and how to link short-term early interventions with a long-term strategy.

The European Union's assessment of the first year of the Peacebuilding Commission is positive. At the same time, we are aware of the major challenges that still lie ahead. The Commission must prove its ability to deliver real benefits to the countries under its consideration. Effective working practices for the Commission's relationship with other United Nations bodies also need to be established. The Commission's relationship with the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Bretton Woods institutions should be enhanced, and those organs, in particular the Security Council, should

take better advantage of the Peacebuilding Commission's advisory role.

The Peacebuilding Commission can consider new countries in its second year. At least one country has already expressed its wish to be included in the Commission's agenda. The Commission should ensure that it has the capabilities to address those countries, in terms of human resources and capacity, and that it has learned the lessons from its experiences with Burundi and Sierra Leone. The Peacebuilding Commission should also continue its reflections on the appropriate time for scaling down and ending the Commission's engagement with a country.

To conclude, the European Union will maintain its positive contribution to the work of the Peacebuilding Commission. We are determined to help the Commission make a positive and measurable impact in the regions where it is engaged. In this context, we stress the importance of the standing invitation extended to the European Community as an institutional donor to participate in the meetings of the Peacebuilding Commission. We look forward to the arrangement finally implemented, allowing for adequate representation of the European Union, given the major contributions that the Union, as an international actor, makes in a number of post-conflict countries and regions worldwide, particularly in the areas of diplomacy, military and security.

Mrs. Angella Brown (Jamaica): Please allow me, Sir, on behalf of the caucus of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in the Peacebuilding Commission, to extend sincere congratulations to you on your election to the presidency of this body. We are confident that under your able leadership the General Assembly will complete its slate of activities in a cordial, efficient and professional manner commensurate with the high office of the presidency and the expectations of the many delegations which make up this Organization.

The report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/62/137) to the Assembly, as mandated by the founding resolutions — General Assembly resolution 60/180 and Security Council resolution 1646 (2005) — is a strong signal that the latest initiatives in the United Nations reform process are under way, in earnest. The completion of its first year in operation and the presentation of this report to the Assembly not only is a defining moment in the existence of the Commission, but will also form a solid basis for work to move forward and add another facet to the already existing body of knowledge, aiding in the consolidation of peace and laying the foundation for the immediate rehabilitation and sustained economic recovery and development of the post-conflict countries under consideration.

Throughout the preceding 12 months, the Peacebuilding Commission successfully grappled with several administrative, organizational and directional issues as it sought to establish itself and fulfil its mandate, catering for the peacebuilding needs of Burundi and Sierra Leone, the first two countries under its consideration.

The Non-Aligned Movement caucus in the Peacebuilding Commission is particularly pleased with the comprehensive character of the content of the report, which in our estimation represents a factual and faithful account of what transpired over the period and in so doing, provides an accurate record of the Commission's work for posterity.

The Non-Aligned Movement continues to emphasize that the development aspects of any strategy geared towards extricating countries emerging from conflict cannot be over emphasized. The Movement strongly agrees that the Peacebuilding Commission cannot ignore fundamental principles such as the rule of law, security sector reform and human rights. But certainly those principles cannot be emphasized at the expense of providing immediate post-conflict risk-reduction strategies, which is the precise and direct purpose of the Commission. Such strategies are geared towards poverty reduction and include education and training, rural agricultural development, private sector reform and other capacity-building initiatives, including the creation of an investor-friendly climate — all of which lead towards job creation, together with enhanced employment opportunities and, by extension, overall improvement in the lives and living conditions of local populations.

The Non-Aligned Movement looks forward to the continuation of the dialogue within the Peacebuilding Commission as we continue to build on the successes of the past months, always mindful that the countries under consideration by the Commission require swift action to implement priority projects as part of the rehabilitation and reconstruction process.

Additionally, the Peacebuilding Commission must continue to identify the means by which funds that are approved for disbursement by the Peacebuilding Fund reach the recipient countries in the shortest possible time. It is not sufficient to identify the urgency of the need while paying scant regard to or becoming lax in the critical follow-up actions at the most crucial stage of the process.

The second year of the Peacebuilding Commission will demand close coordination between the Commission, other United Nations bodies, the Peacebuilding Fund and donor countries and agencies, particularly those on the ground in post-conflict situations, if some of the pitfalls of the recent months are to be avoided. It is also important that the Commission continue its work in the next months with the same level of commitment, dedication and drive that was evident during the period under review. In that connection, the Non-Aligned Movement would like to reiterate several key principles which should continue to guide the Commission's work.

While we welcome the commitment of the donor community in the activities of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Commission is not a donor organization. Its activities involving all stakeholders must be executed in a far broader, more comprehensive and participatory context consistent with its mandate. Decisions regarding the provision of financial resources should, therefore, be guided by national priorities and be based on the collective decision of members of the Peacebuilding Commission. Recommendations for assistance must highlight the priority areas established by the Government of the country under review by the Commission. The matter of Government guidance should also be uppermost in planning the way forward and will certainly serve to strengthen the process of national ownership. This holistic and inclusive approach to evaluation and recommendations adopted at country-specific meetings can only add to the integrity of the process within the Commission.

We believe that, with the architecture of the Commission now completed, its work should take on another dimension as it responds to the expectations of the international community, particularly those of countries emerging from conflict, by producing tangible results with greater and more robust activities in the coming months, including the addition of more countries for consideration as they try to consolidate peace and engineer prosperity.

The Non-Aligned Movement caucus in the Peacebuilding Commission calls for the streamlining of the meetings of the Commission. We must move to dispel the misconception that, because of its different configurations, there is more that one Commission. In this regard, the Organizational Committee must be the focal point of all Commission activities, including the work of the country-specific meetings.

Finally, the NAM continues to pay tribute to Angola, the first Chair of the Commission, under whose guidance the achievements of the Commission during the initial stage were accomplished.

Please allow me to also express appreciation to the respective chairs of the country-specific meetings and the Peacebuilding Support Office for their tireless efforts and excellent contributions during the first session of the Commission.

We also take this opportunity to welcome and extend best wishes to Japan, the new Chair of the Commission, and other incoming members of the new Bureau of the Commission.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): The decision to establish the Peacebuilding Commission taken by the 2005 World Summit was a belated but important recognition of the need for a comprehensive approach to peace and the inextricable relationship between peace and development.

As a founding member of the Commission, Pakistan has had the privilege of contributing to its work in its formative phase. We are deeply committed to the Commission's success. I would like to thank Ambassador Martins of Angola for skilfully guiding the work of the Commission during its first year. We are also thankful to Ambassador Løvald of Norway and Ambassador Frank Majoor of the Netherlands for coordinating the Commission's work in the country-specific formats on Burundi and Sierra Leone, as well as to Ambassador Gallardo of El Salvador for his useful work as chair of the Working Group on Lessons Learned. We also assure our full support to the new Chair of the Commission, Ambassador Yukio Takasu of Japan, who has already displayed his energy in promoting the work of the Commission. Let me finally thank the Peacebuilding Support Office for their important contribution to the work of the Commission.

During the first year, the main focus of the Commission was on peacebuilding in the two countries on its agenda, that is, Burundi and Sierra Leone. Substantive work has been done on the two situations, including the elaboration of integrated strategies, which are to form the framework for the Commission's engagement with the two countries. The process was informed and driven by national ownership and by consultations and initiatives at the field level. The Commission undertook field visits to the two countries. The contribution of the United Nations integrated offices in Burundi and Sierra Leone was also crucial in this process.

Apart from describing the Commission's work, the report of the Commission offers observations and recommendations on outstanding issues and challenges. Since this is formative phase of the Commission, it may be too early to start measuring its real impact or evaluating its work in terms of success or failure. Its performance, during the first year, considering the inherent difficulties and the differences of opinion and expectations that characterized the evolutionary discussions of the Commission, is by all means commendable. We believe that despite "teething problems", good groundwork has been done with regard to the organizational and substantive agenda. Building on this, we hope that the Commission will be able to improve its output in both quality and quantity in the coming years.

The Commission also faces several challenges: political, conceptual, organizational and functional. From the outset, there has been an effort on the part of some to keep the Commission closely tied to and, indeed, subservient to the Security Council. The resulting friction could have been avoided if the Commission's relationship with the three principal organs had been more clearly defined in the founding resolutions. We hope that the Commission's work will evolve with much greater appreciation for the value of collaborative and complementary efforts by the three principal organs. Indeed, it was this need for such a complementary arrangement that served as the rational for the creation of the Commission.

Another problem has been the effort to reduce the role of the Organizational Committee. We agree that most of the work should take place in the country-specific formats. Indeed, this was the concept promoted in Pakistan's 2004 proposal for the creation of ad-hoc composite committees. However, once we all agreed to establish the Organizational Committee, this Committee should be accorded its due place and be fully utilized. It should have a strategic oversight of the work of the Commission, including country-specific meetings and the Working Group on Lessons Learned. The Committee should meet more frequently. The Committee and its chair should be the primary interface of the Commission with all external actors, particularly the principal organs, institutional donors and others. The country-specific formats, designed to generate maximum efficiency and flexibility, should not appear to bypass the Organizational Committee.

Neither should the Commission turn into another forum for donors and recipients. One casualty of such a development would be national ownership on the part of the countries under consideration, and a much bigger casualty could be the Commission itself.

Demands for onerous commitments on the part of the countries on the agenda, introduction of conditions and multiple scrutiny will shift the Commission from its main task of assisting these countries which are, after all, faced with special circumstances. We have seen, for instance, in the discussion on the strategic framework for Burundi, that, while commitments were expected from the country concerned, there was reluctance, on the part of the partners, to agree to concrete commitments themselves.

On the operational side, the main objective should be to maximize the Commission's impact on the ground. Increased system-wide approach and coordination is the key to assisting the transition from conflict to sustainable peace and development. We must not forget that these are complex crises. They must be addressed comprehensively, in all their aspects — political, security, economic, social and humanitarian. It is also necessary to address the root causes in order to effectively prevent relapse into conflict.

The line between peacebuilding and development is not always clear. Still, there is a need to strike a balance between immediate peacebuilding activities and longer-term development priorities. Trade, investment, official development assistance, debt relief and development of the private sector have to be part of the peacebuilding programme.

Sustainable peace and development cannot be ensured without moving a country towards self-sufficiency and reducing its reliance on external

assistance. The best utilization of the country's own resources should be promoted, inter alia, through trade and value addition of raw materials.

The Peacebuilding Commission held around 50 meetings in different formats during the first year. This kind of attention given to the two countries on its agenda would not have been possible in the Security Council, which can only address issues periodically. It is for this reason that we had earlier proposed that the comprehensive reports of the two Integrated Offices in Burundi and Sierra Leone should be considered in the Commission as well. This would improve coordination between the field and headquarters.

There is a need also to make the most effective use of the Peacebuilding Commission's advice and recommendations. The Commission is a unique mechanism in the sense that all actors are around the table. This should translate into better communication and swift action by all concerned. It is important to see also how the advice of the Commission is influencing the work and decisions of relevant actors. The advice of the Commission can be accorded more weight and greater sanction if it is subsequently incorporated and reflected in the decisions of the principal organs.

The international financial institutions, for their part, should demonstrate greater operational flexibility in their interactions with and assistance to the countries under consideration.

The advocacy role of the Peacebuilding Commission needs to be further strengthened to marshal resources, help ensure predictable financing and ensure the continued attention of the international community on the country concerned. The assistance can be made readily available through the Peacebuilding Fund, which is invaluable. However, such assistance is intended to be of immediate or short-term nature. It is therefore important to enhance the catalytic impact of the interventions of the Fund, including assistance provided through its emergency window. But it should be recognized that much larger resources are required and on a sustained basis to carry out the agreed objectives, plans and programmes related to peacebuilding in the countries concerned. The Commission is best placed to help mobilize these resources through other established mechanisms including donor conferences. The principal organs of the United Nations can all help in this resource-generation effort.

Coordination and exchange of information, including lessons learned, between the Fund and the Peacebuilding Commission are vital for a proper perspective and success of the peacebuilding architecture. It may be a good idea to arrange close interaction between the members of the Commission and the Fund's Advisory Group.

In the final analysis, the key to success lies in implementation and follow-up. Peacebuilding strategic frameworks are the common platform for our work. They will need to be complemented by agreed monitoring and tracking mechanisms with regard to the commitments of both the countries concerned and the international community. We will thus have live strategies, which will allow fine-tuning and course correction, responding to critical gaps and requirements as they arise.

The mapping of completed, current and planned activities and the overall resource flows remains an important ongoing exercise. Typical challenges of external resource mobilization have been identified in the mapping exercises carried out by the Peacebuilding Support Office. This should help identify gaps and potential partners and mechanisms to address them.

In conclusion, I would like to say that the Peacebuilding Commission has shown great promise. Its efforts during the first year have been generally appreciated, including by the two countries on its agenda. This should encourage other countries to seek the advice and assistance of the Commission. Pakistan believes that the Peacebuilding Commission is capable of addressing complex crises in several additional countries. The international community has the resources and the capacity to address the challenges that are being confronted by so many countries caught in the vortex of the problems and politics of scarcity. Ultimately, it is poverty and scarcity which must be conquered comprehensively in the Peacebuilding Commission and in the other relevant organs and bodies at the disposal of the international community.

Mr. Abdelaziz (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): It is my pleasure to commence my statement by thanking the Peacebuilding Commission and the Secretary-General for the presentation of the first annual report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its first session (A/62/137) and the report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/62/138).

Convinced of the important role to be played by the Peacebuilding Commission in preventing countries from relapsing into conflict after a post-conflict stage, Egypt sought to become a member of the Commission from its establishment and to have it implement its tasks in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/180 in a manner that would achieve the best possible results.

The first annual report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/62/137) outlines the achievements of the Commission during its first year, in addition to all related substantive and procedural aspects. Accordingly, the General Assembly should assess the pros and cons and make recommendations designed to enhance the roles of the Organizational Committee, the country-specific configurations of Sierra Leone and Burundi and the Working Group on Lessons Learned to enable them to carry out their mandates in the optimum manner.

It is necessary to ensure that the Commission continues to work actively on bringing together all relevant actors and that it provides recommendations and suggestions based on in-depth studies in order to adopt and implement integrated peacebuilding strategies and to consolidate foundations for sustainable development in the countries emerging from conflict. This requires the Commission to strengthen its relations with various relevant organs, departments and programmes of the United Nations as well as with the international financial institutions, donor countries and regional and subregional organizations concerned with peacebuilding, particularly those existing in the same regions as the countries that are under the Commission's consideration.

Consequently, it is imperative for the Commission to develop its tools of engagement with the countries on its agenda. In this regard, I wish to emphasize the usefulness of field missions, which, by facilitating direct dialogue with Governments, Parliaments, civil society and the private sector, make it possible to obtain first-hand information and directly assess peacebuilding priorities.

Experience has demonstrated the importance of the continued promotion by the Commission of its institutional relationships with the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. These relationships still need further delineation and clarification, in a spirit of full respect for the institutional balance between these organs in accordance with their Charter responsibilities. Furthermore, the provisional rules of procedure of the Peacebuilding Commission need to be continually revisited in the light of developments and experience gained from the work of the Commission during its first year, with a view to the formulation of clear institutional rules and unified criteria that have not been influenced by political considerations and the reflection of all the cases under consideration.

The Commission should not only focus its work on the country-specific meetings, but it should also enhance the institutional role of the Organizational Committee with the aim of promoting debate on specific subjects and the refinement of regulations and procedures related to the rules and working methods of the Peacebuilding Commission, taking into account the findings of the Working Group on Lessons Learned.

In order that our efforts may succeed, the Commission should ensure, while pursuing its work, full respect for and adherence to its main principles, particularly the principle of national ownership of the countries under consideration by the Commission. This principle should be applied to the planning, implementation and termination of the work of the Peacebuilding Commission in the country concerned, based on a sovereign national decision by the country concerned without any political or financial pressure. Moreover, monitoring and follow-up mechanisms should be established to ensure that national and international stakeholders abide by their commitments related to peacebuilding priorities agreed between the Commission and the countries concerned.

The Peacebuilding Commission should not act as a "trusteeship commission" passing judgement on the capabilities of countries emerging from conflict, nor as a mediator seeking to gather donor and recipient countries together, nor as a club for donors, which might lead to the marginalization of the role of non-donor countries members of the Commission. Accordingly, the Commission should undertake an in-depth study of the role of the steering committees that review and adopt projects to be incorporated in the priority plans of each of the countries concerned. The Commission should also specify the unified criteria that these committees should adhere to while reviewing the projects to be submitted to the Peacebuilding Commission for adoption, so as not to give the donors

the chance to impose any conditionalities for agreeing on these projects, which would constrain the sovereignty of the country concerned and the independence of its national decisions.

The General Assembly should also fully support the secretariat of the Peacebuilding Commission and provide it with the necessary posts and financial resources to fulfil its role fully, as well as the financial resources needed for increasing the number of field missions to the countries under consideration by the Commission.

In the light of Egypt's persistent support for the Peacebuilding Fund and its goals, we think that countries should fulfil their pledges to the budget of the Fund, especially since the Fund has received only $142 million out of the $226 million pledged by 34 countries. It is estimated that the budget of the Fund should be $250 million. Delays or non-fulfilment of the pledges will hinder the Fund from performing its functions.

In this regard, it is essential to explain the relation between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund. Despite the fact that the Fund is independent and works under the authority of the Secretary-General, its name — Peacebuilding Fund — shows that more coordination and coherence is needed between its activities and the activities of the Peacebuilding Commission, especially since several countries consider that the Fund has become a forum connecting the Secretary-General with the donor countries, separate from the Peacebuilding Commission. This also requires that the management of the Fund develop in a way that increases its capacity to accomplish its work quickly and effectively and to disburse the funds allocated to specific projects. In this context, the Commission should insist on issuing guidance on the general policies of the Fund pursuant to the terms of reference.

In this connection, we call upon the Secretary-General to increase consultation with the Peacebuilding Commission in cases where he determines that a country is eligible for Peacebuilding Fund support. It is not enough to notify the Commission after issuing his decision to disburse resources from the Fund for one country or another. We are looking forward to the creation by the Fund of a mechanism to assess the usefulness of the resources disbursed and for reporting on whether those resources lead to minimizing the possibility of the countries concerned relapsing into conflict.

In conclusion, I wish to extend my congratulations to the Chairperson of the Peacebuilding Commission, Mr. Ismael Gaspar Martins, the Permanent Representative of Angola, for the reporting period. By the same token, we wish to extend our congratulations to the Ambassadors of the Netherlands, El Salvador and Norway for the success of their efforts in guiding the work of the Commission. We wish also to congratulate the Peacebuilding Fund on the considerable efforts made last year, as explicitly reflected in the report. We wish to reiterate our trust that the coming period will witness extensive cooperation between the Peacebuilding Support Office and the members of the Commission with a view to overcoming the problems that faced the Commission in its first year. We wish Japan and the new Peacebuilding Commission members every success in leading the deliberations of the Commission next year.

Ms. Jahan (Bangladesh): The Bangladesh delegation welcomes this opportunity to deliberate on the work of the Peacebuilding Commission during its first year of operation.

We associate ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement caucus. However, we would like to highlight the following points.

The Peacebuilding Commission, as we are all aware, was established to address a lacuna in the United Nations structure and thus reduce post-conflict countries' risk of relapsing into the quagmire of conflict and crisis. With this end in view, the work done so far by the Peacebuilding Commission in its maiden two ventures in Sierra Leone and Burundi has made significant and tangible contributions towards the consolidation of peace in these two countries.

Despite being in a nascent stage, the first year of operation of the Peacebuilding Commission has been quite satisfactory, given the complexity of its work, the heavy mandate and the fact that it has had to chart its own way of functioning and address some critical organizational, procedural and methodological issues, in addition to its substantive work of peacebuilding. The formulation of country-specific integrated peacebuilding strategies appears to be the right approach and these strategies, given their configuration, have all the potential to become an

effective tool for peacebuilding. The Peacebuilding Support Office, the Peacebuilding Fund and the chairs of the country-specific meetings also deserve their share of credit. We commend the countries of Sierra Leone and Burundi for their cooperation and for taking national ownership of the Peacebuilding Commission initiatives.

There can be no sense of complacency, however. There still remains much scope for improvement. We are of the view that operational relations of the Peacebuilding Commission with the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, other intergovernmental United Nations bodies, relevant international, regional and subregional organizations, national stakeholders, financiers and civil society should be further strengthened. Similarly, operational relations with the recently restructured United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations should also be enhanced. The wrangling with which the Peacebuilding Commission was faced in developing its rules of procedure and working methods during its early stage of operation should be avoided by further streamlining. The Organizational Committee should infuse more dynamism into the peacebuilding architecture by playing a more pro-active and lead role.

The Peacebuilding Commission should have a built-in system for stocktaking, so as to continuously build upon its own achievements of peacebuilding. The Commission should also develop a tracking and monitoring mechanism to feed the tracking functions of the integrated peacebuilding strategies in order to assess their accountability and effectiveness. This would enable the Commission to make necessary adjustments in its efforts to have the maximum impact on the ground. The integrated peacebuilding strategies should be comprehensive enough to cover all the peacebuilding priorities.

As the Working Group on Lessons Learned plans to consider a number of other peacebuilding issues, it should devote some time to sharing the valuable peacekeeping experiences of the troop-contributing countries. The lessons learned in that regard should be duly reflected in the integrated peacebuilding strategies. One of the key factors for success in the Peacebuilding Commission's work is the attention of the international community to its peacebuilding activities in the countries of engagement. The Commission and its work, therefore, should be given adequate visibility, through outreach activities, in order to retain this attention.

My delegation is also of the view that, in the cases of Burundi and Sierra Leone, the issue of economic recovery of the post-conflict societies was somewhat less focused on. For furthering the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, we believe attention should also be given to building pluralistic political institutions, creating peace constituencies, restoring an environment of mutual trust, confidence and tolerance and establishing a process of societal reconciliation and healing.

As regards the work of Peacebuilding Commission, Bangladesh from the very outset has advocated the view that post-conflict societies must take charge of their own destiny and that the Commission's work should be based on national ownership. It is gratifying that the Commission has subscribed to an inclusive and nationally driven process aimed at maximizing the involvement of all relevant actors on the ground. In addition, to make peacebuilding initiatives more effective and better suited to realities on the ground, we would like the Commission to include in the integrated peacebuilding strategies domestic initiatives, such as home-grown ideas like microcredit and women's non-formal education, combined with external material support.

The Peacebuilding Commission, on the basis of its operational experience over the first year, has to define the process and timing of disengagement with a country. Before any such disengagement, it should make sure to leave behind an integrated peacebuilding strategy or another mechanism that would make peace self-sustainable even after disengagement. At the same time, the Commission has to expand its operations and chalk out a procedure and basis for the selection of new countries.

We feel that members of the Peacebuilding Commission should be more frequently updated on the operations of the Peacebuilding Fund and that information on disbursements must be shared with adequate lead time. The relationship between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund, and their individual roles, have to be made clear to the stakeholders on the ground in order to dispel confusion as regards eligibility for Peacebuilding Fund support.

For the Peacebuilding Commission, it is just the beginning of a long and arduous journey. As more countries are brought under its consideration, the expectation, responsibilities and complexities of its workload will become heavier. To cope with that, the Peacebuilding Commission and its supporting bodies require incremental political and material support. We, as a member of the Commission, would expect the international community to come forward to assist us in fulfilling our mandate.

It would be grossly remiss of me not to place on record our special tribute to Ambassador Ismael Gaspar Martins of Angola, the first Chair of the Commission, for his wise stewardship, especially at the initial stages of the Commission's work. I also take this opportunity to convey our thanks to Ambassador Johan Løvald of Norway and Ambassador Frank Majoor of the Netherlands for coordinating the country-specific mandate of the Commission. Our thanks go also to Ambassador Carmen María Gallardo Hernández of El Salvador for her stewardship of the Working Group on Lessons Learned.

In closing, I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome and extend the full support of my delegation to the new Chair, Ambassador Yukio Takasu.

Mr. Matussek (Germany): Let me say first of all that Germany fully supports the statement made by the Portuguese presidency of the European Union on behalf of the Union.

Let me thank all those who contributed so greatly to the success of the Peacebuilding Commission in its first session. Let me specifically thank the first Chairman of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission, Ambassador Gaspar Martins of Angola, as well as the two Vice-Chairs, Ambassador Gallardo Hernández of El Salvador and Ambassador Løvald of Norway. Let me also commend Assistant Secretary-General Carolyn McAskie and her colleagues in the Peacebuilding Support Office for the excellent work done. I would also like to congratulate Ambassador Takasu on his election as Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission; I want to wish him all success in his work.

Today's debate on the Peacebuilding Commission's first year of work will help us to evaluate the work done and the results achieved so far, and decide on the way forward for the sixty-second session of the General Assembly and the second year of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission is part of the important reforms of the United Nations. World leaders, at the 2005 World Summit, recognized that international peacebuilding efforts lacked an overall strategic approach and coherence. Countries emerging from conflict face a unique challenge and a high risk of relapsing into violence. The Peacebuilding Commission assists those countries in laying the foundations for sustainable peace and development.

The first year of work of the Peacebuilding Commission was a difficult one. The Commission had to find out how to approach its tasks and how to approach its workload. Provisional rules of procedure for the Commission were adopted after a long consultative process among member States. In addition, a provisional formula was found to ensure the active and productive participation of civil society, including non-governmental organizations, in the work of the Peacebuilding Commission. From our point of view, that was an important step. Burundi and Sierra Leone were placed on the agenda of the Commission. The work in the country-specific meetings included, inter alia, field missions, many videoconferences, special briefings and, last but not least, the formulation of integrated peacebuilding strategies.

The report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its first session (A/62/137) provides us with recommendations on what we should try to achieve during second session: to maximize the Commission's impact on the ground and improve interaction with the field; to ensure that the current peacebuilding processes remain on track; to develop monitoring mechanisms for the integrated peacebuilding strategies; and finally, to ensure that challenges and gaps are addressed in a timely and coherent manner.

In addition, I would like to emphasize some specific issues we should look at in the second year of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The first is the issue of coordination. The Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Support Office should strengthen their capacity to make recommendations and to provide information in order to improve the coordination of all relevant actors within and outside the United Nations.

The second is the issue of lessons learned. The Peacebuilding Commission should broaden its agenda by intensifying dialogue on general peacebuilding issues, such as security sector reform and post-conflict national reconciliation, and should draw lessons learned from past experiences. The Working Group on Lessons Learned is a promising first step in that regard.

The third is the issue of strategies. The engagement of the Peacebuilding Commission in Burundi and Sierra Leone is being felt. Discussions and visits have facilitated the coming together of key stakeholders. The critical threats to the peace process in both countries have been addressed in the integrated peacebuilding strategies. The next step should be strengthening the relevance of the strategies as a tool to generate enhanced support for peacebuilding in Burundi, Sierra Leone and other countries.

The fourth is adding real value. Most important is that the Peacebuilding Commission adds real value and does not duplicate efforts in the task of supporting specific countries in building peace. Integrated peacebuilding strategies should set the decisive frameworks for international and national peacebuilding in those countries where the Commission will take a supportive stance.

Those are my main suggestions for our work during the second year of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Achieving stable peace and an effective settlement of armed conflicts is possible only on the basis of a comprehensive strategic approach and agreement. The transition to sustainable socio-economic recovery is accompanied by many difficulties. The danger of renewed conflict is always present in societies where the original causes of the crisis have not been eliminated.

Countries that have emerged from armed conflict should not find themselves plunged into crisis. That is where they must be effectively helped by the Peacebuilding Commission, whose creation, by parallel resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council, was one of the important achievements in the reform of the Organization in accordance with decisions of the 2005 Summit.

A key task of the Commission is to eliminate a serious gap in the international system of post-conflict peacebuilding. It should help to enhance the coordination and the effectiveness of international assistance to countries emerging from crisis, in conjunction with efforts of the United Nations, international financial institutions and the world donor community. We note in particular the Commission's role, in solid interaction with the Governments of the countries receiving assistance, in identifying, prioritizing and targeting donor resources in order to resolve fundamental problems.

The first annual report of the Peacebuilding Commission confirms that the Commission has much practical potential and is capable of becoming one of the most important international mechanisms in that sphere.

The Commission's work, first on Burundi and Sierra Leone, generally deserves a positive assessment. Four extremely important priority areas for strengthening peace in each of those two countries were defined. The process of developing an integrated strategy of peacebuilding was begun and the parametres of the monitoring mechanisms were agreed upon. The practical work of the Commission on specific countries should be transparent and accompanied by an impartial collective analysis and clearly defined priorities for peacebuilding. We anticipate agreed and effective recommendations from it, which will be expected by the recipient countries first of all.

Next year, the Commission will continue its work on resolving questions of strengthening the functional links between international financial institutions, regional organizations and the donor community. Additional attention should be given to improving cooperation on the ground with all actors in the peacebuilding process and to harmonizing the activities of the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Commission with existing coordination mechanisms, first those within the United Nations system. Their interaction with United Nations agencies, in particular in the field, should not disrupt the existing system of operational activities of the Organization but, on the contrary should bolster it.

Of particular importance is the task of strengthening the organic link between the Commission and the Security Council, above all with regard to issues that are on the agenda of both bodies. It is important to ensure timely exchange of

information between both bodies and a clear division of labour and complementarity. Of course, that must be done in parallel with the development of links between the Commission and the Economic and Social Council.

In addition, we cannot but welcome the great deal of work done by the Peacebuilding Support Office, in which hope lies both for improving the work of the Peacebuilding Commission and for managing the Peacebuilding Fund.

We support focusing the activities of the Fund on assisting countries in the earliest stages of emerging from conflict, while the traditional mechanisms for mobilizing development assistance are not yet functioning. We note the Fund's catalytic role in attracting more-permanent mechanisms of support for the post-conflict recovery processes. In our view, that is the area where the Fund should concentrate its work first of all.

I wish to stress the importance of improving the analysis and evaluation of the peacebuilding requirements of relevant countries by the United Nations country teams, which, according to the scope of the Fund, can initiate decisions on giving the country access to Fund resources without approval by the Commission. That places particular responsibility on the Peacebuilding Support Office, which takes the final decision. We are in favour of clarity, transparence and openness of the criteria for giving countries such access. It must first be given to those countries that are dangerously close to the brink of relapsing into conflict. We count on increased accountability in the functioning of the Fund.

Not much time has passed in order to be able to draw exhaustive conclusions on the effectiveness of the work of the Fund. However, in the future it would make sense to think about organizing an independent study of its activities.

A clear manifestation of our support for the Fund is the decision by the Government of Russia to make a 2 million dollar contribution to the Fund annually, starting in 2008. We expect that those funds will truly strengthen the Fund's potential in the above-mentioned areas of its work.

Mr. Scott (United States of America): It is an honour to present the views of my Government on the important work of the Peacebuilding Commission. The Peacebuilding Commission is an innovation with much promise. This plenary item — a discussion of the annual reports of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund — brings to a close the first year of activity by the Commission. In our view, this has been a year of considerable focus on procedural issues, with progress made on building a foundation for the Commission's productive future work.

Sadly, however, we do not believe that the members of the Peacebuilding Commission can look back over this past year and point to tangible contributions to the lives of the people in Sierra Leone and Burundi — the first two countries taken up by the Commission.

In its second year, we look to the Peacebuilding Commission to sharpen its role in promoting dialogue and coordination on critical challenges to stability in the countries on its agenda. We expect that the Commission will do more to draw the international community's attention to the need for sustained long-term engagement in the countries on the agenda. We look for practical engagement on difficult thematic issues where the Commission has a role to play in bringing together stakeholders, in producing best practices and in broadening the donor base.

The agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission will likely broaden over the coming year to include additional countries, beginning with the pending request of Guinea-Bissau that is currently before the Security Council. Members of the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission should reflect on how the specific considerations of candidate countries will best mesh with the strategic vision and multi-year work of the Peacebuilding Commission. In doing so, we suggest that as a fledgling institution, the Commission should walk before it runs. Demonstrating delivery of concrete results in the countries currently on its agenda should have priority over expanding its work elsewhere.

While working from lessons learned in its first year, the Peacebuilding Commission should also consider new ways of providing advice and recommendations. We saw in the Peacebuilding Commission's first year, that while countries on its agenda face many of the same challenges, differing local circumstances dictate unique approaches. As the Peacebuilding Commission takes on new countries, it should not limit itself to promoting a global comprehensive peacebuilding strategies approach to

countries under consideration, but also consider targeted advice and recommendations on specific thematic sectors or even a geographic region.

We do not see the annual reports of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund as reflecting a consensus on the above issues among members of the Peacebuilding Commission. In particular, we invite your attention to the issue of financing missions of the Peacebuilding Commission outlined in paragraph 43 as an issue demanding further discussion. However, in our view, both reports are a useful reference to the challenges and topics currently before the Peacebuilding Commission and we welcome their publication.

In conclusion, may I add our thanks to the current and former Chairmen of the Commission for their hard work in leading the Peacebuilding Commission as it addresses these key issues which confront the international community.

Mr. Hannesson (Iceland): Let me join others in thanking you, Sir, for giving us the opportunity to participate in the meeting of the General Assembly devoted to the important work of the Peacebuilding Commission and its first annual report (A/62/137). Let me also use this opportunity to pay tribute to the former Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission, my colleague Gaspar Martins from Angola, and the two colleagues from Norway and the Netherlands for their steering of the country-specific work on Burundi and Sierra Leone, as well as my colleague from El Salvador, for chairing the Working Group on Lessons Learned. The new Chairman, Ambassador Yukio Takasu, can be assured of our full support and cooperation.

From the outset, Iceland has been a strong supporter of the Peacebuilding Commission. We regard the Commission as a key achievement of the United Nations reform process. The Peacebuilding Commission together with the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund have important roles to play in bridging the gap between conflict and development and focusing on activities in the field.

The Government of Iceland has contributed $1 million to the Peacebuilding Fund and is planning further contributions. We urge Member States to contribute to the Fund. We are pleased to note that more than $230 million has already been pledged or contributed to it.

After one year of operation, it is time to take stock of where we are and offer guidance for our future work. In that context, we warmly welcome the first annual report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/62/137). This comprehensive and important report clearly indicates that considerable progress has been made towards establishing the working methods of the Commission. We applaud the work of the Organizational Committee of the Commission on organizational and procedural issues. Here I would like to mention the adoption of the provisional rules of procedure and the concept paper setting up the framework for the development of integrated peacebuilding strategies.

The Peacebuilding Commission has identified critical priority areas for peace and consolidation for Burundi and Sierra Leone. The development of an integrated peacebuilding strategy for Burundi is an important step in that regard. Iceland welcomes the fact that an integrated peacebuilding strategy for Sierra Leone has been developed as well. The recommendations of the Commission must be implemented in the countries concerned and within the institutional framework of the United Nations. The Peacebuilding Commission must now build upon that work and further develop its working methods. The underpinnings are already in place. The focus should remain on practical, effective cooperation and avoiding duplication of effort.

The working relationships between the Peacebuilding Commission, the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council should be strengthened through dialogue on a regular basis. Regular meetings between the Peacebuilding Commission Chairs and the Presidents of those bodies would be one possibility. We also need to consider increased cooperation between the Peacebuilding Commission and regional and subregional organizations in order to promote peacebuilding in the countries under consideration.

We are pleased that the Peacebuilding Commission has recognized the link between poverty, weak State capacity and conflict and has ensured that the integrated peacebuilding strategies include job creation, especially for youth, capacity development and the delivery of basic social services as priorities. Only by making substantial progress in those areas can the Peacebuilding Commission help to ensure the sustainability of national peacebuilding efforts.

Iceland remains firmly committed to the work of the Peacebuilding Commission. The success of that body is absolutely dependent on the political will of the countries concerned and the Member States. The main challenge now facing the Peacebuilding Commission is to maximize its impact on the ground. We all have a duty to ensure that the Peacebuilding Commission becomes an effective tool that can contribute in a significant manner to the establishment of peace, stability and development in post-conflict countries. My country is committed to doing its share.

Mr. Hoang Chi Trung (Viet Nam): It is a great honour for me to speak on behalf of the Vietnamese delegation at this important meeting of the General Assembly. My delegation is convinced that our debate today demonstrates our sustained attention to the strengthening of the Peacebuilding Commission and the enhancement of the coordination amongst the principal organs of the United Nations for the sake of sustainable peace and development in the world.

In order to develop an overall strategic and coherent approach to the question of international peacebuilding, world leaders at the 2005 World Summit decided to establish the Peacebuilding Commission, the Peacebuilding Fund and the Peacebuilding Support Office. The new peacebuilding architecture is expected to serve as a dedicated mechanism to address the special needs of conflict-prone countries in various regions of our world.

In that regard, Viet Nam wishes to commend the recent efforts undertaken by the Peacebuilding Commission in the light of General Assembly resolution A/60/180 and Security Council resolution 1645 (2005) respectively. We note with satisfaction that the Organizational Committee has addressed a series of key organizational, procedural and methodological issues in its first year of operation, including the finalization of the operational framework and provisional rules of procedure, the organization of country-specific meetings and the establishment of an ad hoc working group.

The Peacebuilding Fund has also made laudable efforts in mobilizing resources from the international donor community and in examining projects eligible for funding in post-conflict countries. We are even more encouraged by the fact that Sierra Leone and Burundi, the first countries supported by the Peacebuilding Commission, have made remarkable progress in critical areas of national reconstruction and rehabilitation, such as the promotion of good governance, strengthening of the rule of law, reform of justice and the security sector, and capacity-building.

While recognizing the fact that peacebuilding is naturally a complex and long-term process which requires persistent and long-term commitments, my delegation shares the view expressed by various delegations that a lot of ground remains to be covered. A daunting challenge is how the Commission can build up an engaged partnership and active participation among different stakeholders and marshal the resources necessary for stability, recovery and development in war-torn countries. It is therefore necessary for the international community to provide, in a timely manner, adequate resources and support. My delegation fully agrees with the assessment in the report that the main challenge facing the Commission is to maximize its impact on the ground and to make the United Nations peacebuilding architecture an effective instrument of international cooperation in support of countries emerging from conflicts.

The first anniversary of the Peacebuilding Commission has elapsed with both achievements and challenges. If it is to live up to the expectations and aspirations of the international community, improvements should be made in some crucial areas and a number of outstanding issues must be addressed in the coming years. That should include the further development of the working methods of the Commission, the monitoring mechanisms for integrated peacebuilding strategies, and enhanced operational relationships with other intergovernmental bodies as well as regional and subregional organizations.

Enhanced interaction among various stakeholders engaged in post-conflict peacebuilding activities is of vital importance. The United Nations broad experience spanning conflict prevention, mediation, peacekeeping, humanitarian and election assistance, reconstruction and sustainable development must be fully exploited in conjunction with inputs from international financial institutions, non-governmental organizations, civil society and the private sector.

We strongly believe that integrated peacebuilding strategies must fully reflect the socio-economic reconstruction and development priorities of recipient countries, as well as the comparative advantages and

practical commitment of international donors. Such a well-coordinated process, we believe, helps avoid wasteful duplication or misuse and, at the same time, needs periodical review to bring about better outcomes.

We wish to reiterate that the national ownership of post-conflict peacebuilding priority plans and initiatives must remain at the forefront of any effort aimed at sustaining peace, initiating development and promoting post-conflict recovery. Foreign assistance plays a supplementary role and cannot replace home-grown endeavours for enhancing institutional frameworks, reinforcing capacity-building and strengthening legal and administrative systems that ultimately bolster autonomy and self-determination.

My delegation agrees that the future work of the Commission must ensure that peacebuilding processes remain on track and that challenges are addressed in a timely and coherent manner by all relevant actors. In the early phase of its life, the Commission has a number of issues to address in order to improve its effectiveness and broaden its impact on the ground. To that effect, the General Assembly plays the central role in conducting regular reviews of the activities of the Commission, as well as in formulating sound guidance and policies for the effective operation of the Commission.

Mr. Heller (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation welcomes this opportunity to consider the report submitted by the Peacebuilding Commission at the end of its first session, pursuant to resolution 60/180.

Mexico acknowledges the work done by Ambassador Gaspar Martins of Angola, who had the sensitive task of leading the Organizational Committee at the beginning of its work. We express the hope that the chairmanship of Ambassador Yukio Takasu of Japan will be crowned with success.

My delegation also commends the dedication shown by the coordinators of the country-specific configurations, Ambassador Johan Løvald of Norway and Ambassador Frank Majoor of the Netherlands, as well as by Ambassador Gallardo Hernández of El Salvador in her work as coordinator of the working group on lessons learned.

We congratulate Ms. Caroline McAskie, Assistant Secretary-General in the Peacebuilding Support Office, on her work and commitment during this innovating phase of the new peacebuilding architecture being put together by our Organization.

The recognition of major gaps in the United Nations peacebuilding efforts in countries emerging from conflict, as well as the recurrence of violence in some national situations, led our heads of State and Government at the 2005 World Summit to agree to establish the Commission — one of the concrete outcomes of the United Nations reform process.

During the Commission's first year of operations, it has become clear that the peacebuilding process must be approached on the ground and by taking into consideration the specificities of the various countries concerned. No model repeats itself; every country has its own characteristics and history. Creative proposals are therefore required to build frameworks and programmes that harmonize with national realities. Mexico therefore believes that the Commission must be directed by the following guiding points.

First, the full consent of a country and its Government that may be included in the Commission's programme is necessary. Secondly, the process must be defined on the basis of priorities established by each Government concerned. Thirdly, national, regional and international actors must cooperate on the basis of a common vision of purposes and priorities.

While we recognize that, as a recently established body, the Commission is still being defined and its working methods developed, we are encouraged by its Organizational Committee's decision to establish, in close coordination with the Government of Burundi, an integrated peacebuilding strategy with the support of the United Nations and members of civil society. We are also pleased that a similar strategy is being developed with the Government of Sierra Leone.

We believe that the Commission should redouble its efforts to improve its approaches and working methods during its second session, when it will also have to address pending issues. Among those, we note the need to establish tracking and monitoring mechanisms for integrated peacebuilding strategies in countries under its consideration. My delegation feels that, without such mechanisms, it will be difficult to assess the impact of the Commission's work on the ground. Another important task will be to ensure that national Governments are able to deliver peace dividends to their peoples through economic recovery programmes.

Mexico also considers it essential that socio-economic conditions in the post-conflict phase be given priority in the context of peacebuilding efforts so that the proper balance can be struck between the demand for reform in the judicial and security sectors and in the sphere of the rule of law on the one hand and meeting the basic needs of the population on the other.

Moreover, in order to promote United Nations system-wide coherence, the Commission should strengthen its coordinating role and its relationships with other United Nations organs, in particular the Economic and Social Council, as well as with regional organizations and entities outside the United Nations system.

Establishing a lasting peace is a process in which the Commission, as the coordinating body, has the challenge of promoting a common vision among all concerned actors, with a view to overcoming the enormous challenge of transforming a society emerging from painful conflict into one in which peace, security and development prevail.

We welcome the Secretary-General's report on the operation and activities of the Peacebuilding Fund (A/62/138), which enables Member States to fulfil their mandate to provide policy guidance on the use of the Fund. My delegation understands that because of the recent implementation of the Fund — in January 2007 for Burundi and in March 2007 for Sierra Leone — it is premature to analyse its impact on peacebuilding initiatives in those two countries. However, we are pleased with progress in both Burundi and Sierra Leone, the latter being where the Fund helped support national authorities during the successful electoral process in September. National ownership of a peace process and the Fund's catalytic effect in encouraging the long-term commitment of donors are the two basic principles defining the Fund and should continue to guide its operations.

We support the Peacebuilding Support Office, and we call for the streamlining of the Office's procedures, on the basis of the lessons learned in the first nine months of the operation of the Fund, so as to further optimize the use of resources and to make access more flexible in order to address the most pressing problems of peacebuilding during the early stages of the process. The Fund can take successful experiences into account in considering future cases.

Although the Fund relies on voluntary contributions, it is important that it receive, on a predictable basis, financial resources with which to carry out its short-term and medium-term activities. Without adequate resources, the Commission will not be able to completely fulfil its mandate. Mexico supports the work of the Commission and it has recently conveyed its decision to make a financial contribution to the Fund.

Without disregarding the challenges inherent in these matters, Mexico is confident of the contribution that the Commission can make to the work of the Organization. For this reason, it is important that Member States closely follow its work and ensure its development in order to guarantee the greatest possible impact in meeting the goals that led to its creation.

Mr. Liu Zhenmin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation wishes to thank Ambassador Takasu, Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission, for presenting to the sixty-second session of the General Assembly the Commission's report on its first session (A/62/137). Our thanks go also to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his report on the operation of the Peacebuilding Fund (A/62/138). We support the conclusions and recommendations contained in those reports.

Two years ago, world leaders unanimously decided to establish a United Nations peacebuilding commission, bringing hope for peace to people trapped in conflicts. As a member of the Commission, the Chinese delegation is pleased to see that, under the leadership of Ambassador Gaspar Martins of Angola, Chairman of the Commission at its first session, the Peacebuilding Commission achieved fruitful results in its work over the past year in the following areas. First of all, it established sound provisional rules of procedure and guidelines to ensure the orderly and consistent conduct of its work. Secondly, it set up flexible and diverse formats for its meetings and built partnerships with all sides on an equal footing. Finally, it encouraged ownership by the countries concerned, winning their trust and establishing good working relationships with them.

Mr. İlkin (Turkey), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Of course, as a newly founded body, the Peacebuilding Commission still faces a host of challenges, including how to enhance its value-added

role, to coordinate with other United Nations organs and to increase its efficiency. While it has full confidence in the Peacebuilding Commission's work in the coming year, the Chinese delegation wishes to make a few suggestions on ways to improve it.

First, the Peacebuilding Commission should further define its role as an advisory body. The relevant provisions of the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions should be scrupulously implemented. The Peacebuilding Commission provides advice both to the General Assembly and the Security Council and to the countries concerned. Therefore, the Commission should marshal resources both within and outside the system and should make concrete recommendations that are effective and to the point.

Secondly, the Peacebuilding Commission should properly define its relationships with other United Nations organs. Within the United Nations system, it should increase its interaction with the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. It should also make full use of the resources of United Nations funds and programmes on the ground to prevent duplication and waste.

Thirdly, the Peacebuilding Commission should strike a balance between partnership and ownership. The partnerships established by the international community through the Peacebuilding Commission with countries concerned enable the international community to provide necessary assistance to those countries. But a partner can be no more than a participating party: the destiny of the countries concerned is in their own hands. The international community should not take everything over from them.

Fourthly, the Peacebuilding Commission should give consideration to the special needs of African countries. African hot-spot issues account for some two thirds of the items on the Security Council's agenda, and most United Nations peacekeeping operations are in Africa. The Peacebuilding Commission should continue to make this one of the important factors in taking on new countries to be included in its agenda.

I would also like to mention, in particular, a major component of the Peacebuilding Commission: the Peacebuilding Fund. As a new financing mechanism, the Fund is of a great significance for launching relevant peacebuilding programmes. Its operations over the past year have demonstrated its key role as a catalyst. While by and large satisfied with the financing and functioning of the Fund, the Chinese delegation looks forward to efforts by the Secretary-General to ensure that the Fund is more transparent and better conforms to relevant standards and norms. The Chinese Government will redeem its pledge to the Fund on time.

Nothing in the world is more precious than peace, and no approach is better than cooperation. The Peacebuilding Commission embodies everyone's aspirations for peaceful reconstruction and our sincere expectations of win-win results through cooperation. Let us join hands and contribute to a bright future for the Peacebuilding Commission.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): I would like to begin by thanking the President of the General Assembly for organizing this important debate. It offers a very useful opportunity to take stock of the work of the Peacebuilding Commission and of the Peacebuilding Fund following their first anniversaries. It also allows us to chart the challenges that we still face.

I would like to align myself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Portugal on behalf of the European Union.

But first, I would like to offer some tributes in recognition of the enormous energy and time that members of the Peacebuilding Commission have put into the establishment of the Commission. Its first year was always going to be a challenge, as there had been no precedents set for its work. I would like to thank the previous Chairmen of the Organizational Committee, Ambassadors Gaspar Martins and Oshima, and the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support and her team; and I would like to congratulate the new Chairman, Ambassador Takasu, on his appointment. I would also like to express my country's thanks to the Netherlands and Norway for the achievements accomplished so far in the country-specific work in Burundi and Sierra Leone and to pay tribute to the authorities of those two countries who have joined us in many video conferences to talk about the issues that the Commission is dealing with. Finally, I would like to thank El Salvador for taking forward the work on lessons learned and Ghana for taking on the role of Vice-Chair.

In the first year of the Peacebuilding Commission, thanks to the engagement of the Governments of Burundi and Sierra Leone, the United

Nations teams in both countries and, of course, their Permanent Representatives, we have seen a constant reminder of the centrality of the Commission's main focus: its country-level work. National ownership of the peacebuilding process is vital; so too is the need for broad and substantive consultation among all stakeholders in shaping the peacebuilding agenda.

The progress articulated in the annual reports before us demonstrates the achievements made. These need to be built upon if we are to ensure that the Peacebuilding Commission delivers on its ultimate goal and its ultimate test: helping to prevent countries from relapsing into conflict and helping them to build a solid foundation for peace and stability. Over the past year, there has been much talk about how the Commission can add value. We consider that where it can have impact lies in its two main functions: first, providing a forum where the international community can help address political barriers to peacebuilding; and secondly, helping bring coherence and harmonization to the international community's efforts in the countries under consideration.

Setting up the Joint Verification and Monitoring Mechanism in Burundi and completing the Sierra Leone Compact in the coming months will be important steps in defining the commitments of all parties. I think it is important that we have two slightly different mechanisms for each country, with the main point being that they are tailored to what the country on the agenda needs. Living up to the relevant responsibilities — whether they be those of the Government, of political parties or of Commission members — will be the key test. But there is a need to ensure that that does not become just a mechanical process. The Peacebuilding Commission needs to stay alive to the very difficult challenges faced by countries emerging from conflict. That is why my Government is greatly encouraged by the approach used in the recent conclusions and recommendations of the Commission that followed the report of the Chair of the country-specific meeting on Burundi.

We believe that those conclusions and recommendations demonstrate the importance of the advice and the relationships that the Peacebuilding Commission has with Governments, the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the international financial institutions and other partners. Strengthening those relationships will be essential for improving the impact of the Commission's work and for ensuring that it is practical in its approach.

I see five issues that spring from that point. First, at some point in the near future, the Peacebuilding Commission will need to define more clearly how it works with its parent bodies and with the Economic and Social Council. Perhaps that will become clearer with time as practical precedents are established.

Secondly, the country-specific work of the Peacebuilding Commission should not remain static. It is important that further countries be referred to the Commission's agenda this year. This should be linked to the capacities of the Commission and of the Peacebuilding Support Office. Both need to define what their limits are.

Thirdly, in taking on new countries, the Peacebuilding Commission needs to consider from the outset what its niche is in the country concerned. It needs to take stock of what plans and programmes already exist and to identify critical gaps. In addressing these, the Commission needs to take stock of the broad range of skills, experiences and resources of its members.

Fourthly, it is important that the Peacebuilding Commission's relationship with the countries on its agenda not be an excessive burden on them. It needs to be clear about what it expects of a country and vice versa. We see that building a solid partnership is the key to success.

Fifthly, as a number of other speakers have mentioned, the Peacebuilding Support Office needs to build on its work to date if it is to become the United Nations hub for peacebuilding. The Office should have strong links with all other parts of the United Nations system working on peacebuilding, and it should be able to signpost United Nations country teams to relevant skills and best practices. That will also further the work of the Commission in promoting and adopting best practices.

As far as the Peacebuilding Fund is concerned, we welcome the establishment of the Advisory Group, and we look forward to receiving the paper that it has commissioned to produce strategic guidance on use of the Fund. It will need to provide greater clarity about the structural relationship between the Commission and the Fund and about areas where strategically greater ties can be forged. It will need to take stock of the

various settings in which the Fund can be employed in order to ensure that it can add the most value possible.

With regard to sequencing the work of the Peacebuilding Commission and of the Peacebuilding Fund, the United Kingdom believes that, where countries on the Commission's agenda have existing donor mechanisms, the Commission's strategy work needs to come before the bulk of Fund funding. That will enable the Commission to give strategic guidance on the use of the funds. But ultimately, the Fund is likely to have the greatest value in those countries coming out of conflict where there are no established donor mechanisms or where opportunities suddenly arise for Peacebuilding Fund resources to provide a catalytic role in promoting peacebuilding. In that respect, we are encouraged by the recent use of the emergency, or third, window of the Fund for Côte d'Ivoire and the Central African Republic.

Finally, the United Kingdom's overall assessment of the Peacebuilding Commission and Peacebuilding Fund is, like that of many of our colleagues, broadly positive. In their second year, the Commission and the Fund need to consolidate their work to date and to ensure that these issues are taken up and developed. We believe that it is incumbent upon all of us to invest our time, money and political capital to ensure that the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund reduce the risk of the recurrence of conflict. The United Kingdom is committed to building partnerships to that end.

Mr. Sen (India): Thank you, Mr. İlkin, for presiding over this meeting; I am very pleased that you are presiding over a meeting in which I am taking part. I would also like to thank the President of the General Assembly for scheduling today's timely discussion on the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund.

Let me begin by expressing my appreciation to Japan for the work that it has already accomplished as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, to the Permanent Representative of Angola for his work over most of the past year as first Chairman of the Commission, and to the Chairs of the country-specific configurations and the Chair of the Working Group on Lessons Learned.

We associate ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). We thank Mr. Raymond Wolfe for his work as NAM coordinator in the Peacebuilding Commission.

India is strongly committed to the objectives and work of the Peacebuilding Commission, and has also contributed to the resources of the Peacebuilding Fund. We have read the report (A/62/137) of the Peacebuilding Commission, as well as the report (A/62/138) of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund. We note the important points made in those reports. Indeed, since we were associated with the finalization of the report of the Peacebuilding Commission, we are well acquainted with it. These reports will be of lasting value to the international community and to the Peacebuilding Commission as we chart our course in the area of peace consolidation in the year ahead.

Without dwelling on these reports, which are public documents, I must point out that much has been left unsaid. In the case of the Peacebuilding Commission that is natural, since multilaterally negotiated reports inevitably highlight the lowest common denominator. Nevertheless, it encapsulates several of the more important achievements of the group, which are not inconsiderable developments and are worthy of praise. However, I would like to focus upon some elements that are not reflected, but are of central importance, in India's perspective, for the future work of the Peacebuilding Commission.

First, we need to collectively exert greater efforts to move beyond debating issues of process to implementing measures. Process issues distract us from the real purpose of the Peacebuilding Commission, which is to assist countries on the agenda with focused and topical advice through the marshalling of resources. To us, it seems evident that we can only resolve this problem by confronting it squarely, and not by bypassing it and moving on. Therefore, while it is understandable that some see the empowerment of the country-specific configurations as a means to deliver concrete outcomes, that is not a durable solution. The solution lies in making the Organizational Committee, which is the steering mechanism of the Peacebuilding Commission, work better. We must therefore harmonize the deliberations of both the Organizational Committee and the country-specific configurations, and make both more result-oriented.

Secondly, while providing advice is both logical and natural for a body that is defined as an advisory

body, there is a need to also listen to those whom we wish to assist. Sometimes the discourse in the Peacebuilding Commission, whether within the Organizational Committee or the country-specific configurations, does not suggest that this is the case. At one level, countries on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission do need to hear the full gamut of views and suggestions made with the best of intentions by each of us. Providing good, constructive and candid advice dispassionately is important, and therefore it is difficult. But that is not nearly as difficult as listening carefully to what the various actors on the ground are saying. While their views may divert from our advice, meaningful advice must involve a two-way dialogue, not one-way transmission. In that connection, it would be helpful if the countries concerned could also tell us clearly the areas in which their need for assistance is most critical. Such inputs should form the basis of more focused, action-oriented and practical discussions within the Peacebuilding Commission.

I might add, in that context, that the Peacebuilding Commission could certainly do better — at least we could certainly be more creative — with regard to the form in which the Commission provides advice. For instance it would have a better impact if the Peacebuilding Commission were to facilitate access by targeted countries to eminent specialists who have the expertise to provide advice in key areas of peacebuilding.

Thirdly, while it is important to focus upon the advisory role of the Peacebuilding Commission, there is occasionally a tendency to neglect its role in focusing international attention, and in particular assisting in the marshalling of resources. Important though it may be, advice alone will not consolidate peace. The mobilization of resources is the key vehicle by which post-conflict societies can begin to address critical issues in the area of peace consolidation. Thus far, this aspect has received inadequate attention in the Peacebuilding Commission. We look forward to discussing creative solutions by which the Commission could be more involved with the central aspect of peace consolidation.

In this context, I should like to draw attention to the Peacebuilding Fund. We welcome its operationalization and the fact that it has begun to disburse catalytic funding to Sierra Leone and Burundi, as recommended by the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission, and also to other countries in need of emergency assistance. However, while the operation of the Peacebuilding Fund is certainly within the letter of the resolution that established it, we are not fully convinced that it is operating fully within the spirit of that resolution. To be candid, far more transparency is needed in the operation of the Peacebuilding Fund: much more consultation with the Peacebuilding Commission and more prompt relaying of information to the Commission regarding the utilization of funds. This is essential not only for purposes of information, but also for the credibility of the Peacebuilding Fund. Ultimately, since the Fund is based on contributions from Member States, it will only detract from its sustainability if it is not more transparent and consultative.

My fourth point relates to the capacity of the Peacebuilding Commission and its support mechanism, the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO). While the PBSO has done well in assisting the Peacebuilding Commission, even as recruitment for the PBSO was under way, there is now a need for greater involvement on the part of the larger United Nations system — in New York and on the ground — in the work of the Commission. The PBSO alone cannot compensate for the entire United Nations system. Other arms of the Secretariat, including the United Nations country team concerned, must provide information to the Peacebuilding Commission on developments on the ground in the target countries where the Commission is involved. That is particularly so given that the Peacebuilding Commission is comprised of Member States that may not always have diplomatic representation on the ground in the countries concerned. We all know that access to good, succinct and relevant information from the ground is usually priceless. That is nowhere more the case than in the Peacebuilding Commission.

The last, although certainly not the least, point relates to perspective. We must keep in mind that the ultimate goal of our collective efforts is to enable countries on the agenda to develop the capacity to implement the relevant programmes and to consolidate peace independent of our direct involvement. That is to say, irrespective of how many actors we may wish to listen to on the ground, the protagonist can only be one, the Government of the country concerned. The primary focus cannot but be to strengthen the capacity of a post-conflict State to govern effectively and to

govern well. If it does so, it will be able to mobilize human and material resources to achieve development. It is development that is the most enduring guarantee of any long-term peace-consolidation strategy. Only then will we have truly succeeded in our efforts.

I would like to conclude by once again underlining India's commitment to the fullest participation in the Peacebuilding Commission and in continuing to work to make that body not only effective but, above all, relevant to the challenges for which it was created.

Mr. Lacroix (France) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to thank the President for having organized today's especially timely debate.

First of all, I should like to say that France fully associates itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Portugal on behalf of the European Union. I shall therefore limit myself to a few brief comments.

The stakes in the success of the Peacebuilding Commission are considerable, and are commensurate with the challenges posed by post-conflict stabilization. Member States gathered at the highest level in this Hall to collectively set a very ambitious goal for the Commission — one well beyond the establishment of a new bureaucratic body. I believe that it is important to keep that fact in mind and ensure that we together honour the commitments that were made. France believes that to be the purpose of this debate.

Following its first year of functioning, the Peacebuilding Commission must now begin full operations. Much has already been accomplished in that regard. My delegation would like to pay tribute to Mr. Gaspar Martins, Permanent Representative of Angola and the Commission's previous Chairperson. We have now established a process for bringing together all the actors in a given situation and putting in place a strategy to pool their efforts. In that connection, I should like to refer to the work done to produce the Strategic Framework for consolidating peace in Burundi, which focuses on a number of limited priorities and commitments tailored to the crucial stakes involved at the current stage of peacebuilding in that country. This document was prepared in close cooperation with the Government of Burundi and, equally important, with political parties, civil society and, more generally, with all other stakeholders on the ground.

The Peacebuilding Commission must now move to an operational phase and guide the implementation of the Strategic Framework. In conjunction with locally established mechanisms, that will entail providing support for the necessary efforts and initiatives and following up progress by ensuring that deadlines are met. France hopes that similar efforts will soon be undertaken with regard to Sierra Leone. In that connection, we look forward to the return of Ambassador Majoor from his visit to Freetown, where a new, democratically elected Government has just begun its work.

The issue of inscribing new countries on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission has now arisen. In accordance with its role in that regard, the Security Council is currently seized of the matter. France believes that this issue is inextricably linked to the ability of the Peacebuilding Commission to address the situations on its agenda and produce tangible results for those countries. With that aim in mind, we are debating the issue openly and imaginatively.

The need to produce results should also guide the Commission's working methods. To be more efficient, the Commission should take full advantage of new information and communications technologies, as it has begun to do through its frequent use of videoconferencing. France would like to thank the Secretariat for its support in that regard, and to encourage it to continue. In that connection, the upcoming consideration of the Commission's Internet website will be an opportunity to think about establishing a genuine platform for discussion among all stakeholders.

Along with the Peacebuilding Support Office, the Peacebuilding Fund, which is intended to play a catalytic role, is an important tool in ensuring that the Commission is able to concentrate on pressing priorities, the filling of gaps and producing concrete results. France believes it essential that the operations of the Peacebuilding Fund be fully in line with the work of the Commission in its various configurations vis-à-vis the countries on its agenda and also its work in other areas. Given that the Peacebuilding Commission is a new tool, the Commission must fully adhere to the need for coherence and integration in the

efforts of the entire international community, which called for the establishment of the Commission.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to reiterate the need to remain true to the prevailing spirit at the time of the Commission's establishment, a body whose basic goal is to bring actors together in the post-conflict process so as to ensure better synergy of efforts, fill gaps where necessary, avoid duplication and promote the international community's efforts in a given situation. That requires in particular the close involvement of those who are able to provide expertise and resources. That is especially the case with international financial institutions, which are in fact actors and should play their full role in that process. It also requires the long-term active involvement of the countries concerned in a spirit of national ownership. Countries must also have a clear understanding of what the Commission is and is not. The Peacebuilding Commission must remain focused on each situation and its peacebuilding priorities. Nothing would affect the success of the Commission more than dispersed effort.

Lastly, I would like to say that my delegation has full trust in Japan's new chairmanship of the Peacebuilding Commission. We are certain that it will take into account all the elements I have just referred to. More generally, we are confident that it will ensure the strengthening of the Commission and the achievement of tangible results, which is of course our common goal.

Mr. Natalegawa (Indonesia): Let me first express our gratitude to the President for convening this important joint debate on the report (A/62/137) of the Peacebuilding Commission and the report of the Peacebuilding Fund (A/62/138). We are thankful to the Secretary-General for the presentation of his report on the Peacebuilding Fund. We are also thankful to the Peacebuilding Commission for its first annual report.

Indonesia associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement caucus in the Peacebuilding Commission.

The rationales for establishing the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund were to support fragile societies recovering from the devastation of war, prevent a relapse into conflict and address gaps in post-conflict peacebuilding efforts.

Having been entrusted with the responsibility of being a member of the Peacebuilding Commission, we are particularly pleased to see the Commission and Peacebuilding Fund come of age during their first year of operation. Having been involved in the Peacebuilding Commission during its first year, we would like to offer some remarks that we hope will contribute to making the international peacebuilding architecture more robust.

First, our deliberations in the Peacebuilding Commission have rightly emphasized the importance of addressing good governance, the rule of law, security sector reform, the fight against corruption, and human rights for all, which are the necessary ingredients for the establishment of a pluralistic and tolerant society. While those issues are of relevance in crafting a sound peace consolidation strategy, the Peacebuilding Commission should provide equal attention to the issue of development. There is overwhelming evidence that lasting peace cannot be achieved in the absence of economic development and an improvement in the capacities of the State.

It is not a coincidence that 9 out of 10 countries that have experienced conflict at one point or other since 1990 are impoverished and have the lowest human development indicators. Even when there has been a formal peace agreement, the vicious cycle of poverty and instability has heightened the risk of relapse into violence. In his report on the work of the Organization, the Secretary-General states that "there can be no development without peace and no peace without development, always in the spirit of respect for human rights and the fundamental freedoms of humankind" (*A/62/1, para. 42*).

This conviction should be implemented in a concrete manner in our deliberations to draw up peacebuilding strategies for countries on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Secondly, it is very well understood by all Members of the United Nations that national ownership is a fundamental principle in peacebuilding processes. The Peacebuilding Commission needs to maintain this as its core principle, and practise it. It should be willing to listen attentively and to pay heed to the national Governments concerned. We also need to go the extra mile to listen more carefully to what people in the field genuinely need. There should be listening

with an open mind, without superfluous preconceptions as to what may be needed in the countries concerned.

We agree that the voices of civil society and other relevant stakeholders in the field are essential to enhance national ownership. Such a perspective is consistent with the fact that, as a matter of principle, the voice of a democratically elected Government is the prime source for the Peacebuilding Commission's consideration, as it is only an elected Government that can be held accountable by the people through the vote. Partnership and synergy between Governments and civil society is key.

Thirdly, the integrated peacebuilding strategies (IPS) proposed by the Commission will only contribute to laying the foundations for sustainable recovery and the consolidation of peace if they are truly comprehensive and fully supported by the international community, including with the full involvement and support of the Bretton Woods institutions and the other relevant actors.

Fourthly, the integrated peacebuilding strategies laid out by the Peacebuilding Commission are only strategies and promises. Their progress will need to be monitored. The report of the Peacebuilding Commission states that a monitoring mechanism in that regard will be developed. We would underline the fact that such a mechanism, as necessary as it is, should not be too complicated and place an unnecessary burden on Governments, which face severe capacity constraints. It must also be evident that the responsibilities of all sides in any monitoring tool are balanced and in keeping with the essence of the global partnership for development.

Fifthly, as has also been very aptly stated in the conclusion of the report of the Peacebuilding Commission, the biggest challenge is how to implement peacebuilding strategies in the field in a concrete manner. Fine-tuning efforts by the peacebuilding system in New York should have an impact on the ground that is felt directly by the local community. Maximum effect will be achieved if the Peacebuilding Commission focuses on being practical and results-oriented.

Moreover, in order to have an impact on the countries concerned, the Commission needs to intensify its efforts at bringing together all relevant actors to marshal resources. Apart from taking this into account in its country configurations, the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission can explore that issue as a specific subject. In that context, the Committee may wish to explore engagement with non-traditional partners and the corporate sector, which has experienced the rise of numerous organizations interested in having a double bottom line — on profit and social-welfare investments.

Recommendations for coordination by the Commission are another crucial aspect that will enhance cooperation and coherence in the field of international post-conflict issues, thereby enhancing synergies on the ground.

There is also a need to perhaps consider developing, with the assistance of the Peacebuilding Support Office, a template communications strategy that can be utilized with case-specific adjustments in different scenarios.

The ability of the Peacebuilding Commission to garner international attention long after conflict stories slip from media headlines is intrinsic to its capacity for advocacy and resource mobilization.

In conclusion, I would like to share with the General Assembly a few thoughts on how Indonesia views the important role of the Assembly in ensuring that the peacebuilding machinery of the United Nations functions well to generate maximum output in the field.

The General Assembly needs to enhance its interaction with the Peacebuilding Commission. The Assembly could provide recommendations to the Commission in leading efforts to consolidate peace. The General Assembly has a role in, and the mandate for, the overall policy guidelines in peacebuilding-related matters, as the Assembly has the unique capacity to address the issues of security and development.

The Economic and Social Council can also play an important role, with its capacity for advocacy and the technical capabilities of its various commissions and subsidiary bodies. There must be regular interaction between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Economic and Social Council, where the relevant lessons learned and best practices can be shared.

Another contribution that the General Assembly could make would be to assist the Peacebuilding Commission in carrying out its mandate to marshal

resources. Among other things, the General Assembly could encourage Member States to contribute to the Peacebuilding Fund. The role of the Fund is critical in providing quick and concrete peace dividends. At the same time, the General Assembly can monitor how resources from the Peacebuilding Fund are being used. There is also a need to speed up the process of making disbursements from the Fund, to see to it that projects are well coordinated with other mechanisms inside and outside the United Nations and to ensure that duplication is minimized.

Before I conclude, allow me to reiterate Indonesia's commitment to the cause of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund. We will continue to engage with others towards our aim of ensuring that both bodies produce tangible results.

The Acting President: I wish the representative of Indonesia continued success in his new and important assignment.

Mr. Cho Hyun (Republic of Korea): My delegation would first like to join others in thanking the members of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Secretary-General for their tireless efforts to put the Commission on a sound footing in its first year. We also appreciate the excellent work done by Ambassador Ismael Gaspar Martins of Angola, the first Chairperson of the Commission. Let me also convey my congratulations to Ambassador Takasu of Japan on his nomination as the Commission's next Chairperson.

My delegation notes with satisfaction that the Peacebuilding Commission is already playing a proactive role in the promotion of international peace and security, despite the fact that it was launched less than a year ago. Burundi and Sierra Leone, which were referred to the Commission for its consideration, are cases in point. We are pleased that the Commission has been cooperating closely with those two countries to draw up comprehensive plans to consolidate peace and reduce their risk of relapsing into conflict.

These early outcomes demonstrate the potential of the Peacebuilding Commission. Nevertheless, there are still procedural details to be ironed out. We hope that this process will be completed soon, thereby allowing the Peacebuilding Commission to focus its attention more fully on its substantive work.

Peacebuilding is a long-term and very costly process. It requires a holistic and synergistic approach, including through the coordination of the peacebuilding work of the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and such other actors as international financial institutions. My delegation therefore welcomes the serious efforts that the Peacebuilding Commission has made to bring together those various actors, as well as civil society and regional organizations. We encourage the Commission to continue such efforts.

Member States should support the Peacebuilding Fund, in order to give the Peacebuilding Commission the financial resources necessary to carry out its work. In this regard, my delegation is pleased to note from the report (A/62/138) of the Secretary-General that, as of July 2007, the Peacebuilding Fund had received pledges and contributions exceeding 90 per cent of the $250 million funding target. The Republic of Korea has contributed $3 million. We hope that, as the Peacebuilding Commission continues to demonstrate its value, Member States will respond by contributing greater resources to the Fund.

In peacebuilding efforts, time is of the essence. My delegation is concerned that, at present, several months transpire between the announcement of an allocation to a country and the first disbursement. As the Peacebuilding Fund was conceived as a way to respond rapidly to immediate peacebuilding needs, serious efforts should be made to significantly shorten the delay.

In terms of the Peacebuilding Commission's work in post-conflict societies, my delegation recognizes the concerns of many Member States with regard to national ownership. We believe that sustainable peace can only be built with the active participation of the national authorities of the countries involved. Peace and security within each State are most appropriately and effectively maintained by a fully functioning national Government. Peacebuilding efforts should therefore serve to strengthen, not weaken, national Governments.

The reality, however, is that peacebuilding efforts are most often needed in situations where national Governments have been severely undermined, or where their very legitimacy has been brought into question. Even in extreme cases where there is no competent

national authority, the international community still has a responsibility to support post-conflict peacebuilding.

The Republic of Korea is a strong supporter of international peacebuilding efforts. Indeed, our own history of recovery from conflict helps us to recognize the tremendous value of international engagement. That is why we supported the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund. We have also participated in United Nations activities in Timor-Leste and other post-conflict situations. Our commitment to the peacebuilding work of the United Nations remains firm. We look forward to seeing the Peacebuilding Commission take on an increasingly proactive role, thereby contributing significantly to United Nations efforts to ensure peace, stability, development, the rule of law and the protection of human rights.

The Acting President: I wish the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea continued success in his new and important assignment.

Mr. Løvald (Norway): The establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission was a concrete expression of the international community's commitment to improve and expand its efforts in the area of peacebuilding. The achievements of the Peacebuilding Commission have already been substantial, despite the brief period of its existence. I shall limit my remarks to highlighting a few of the issues that my delegation believes we must pay attention to in the time to come. The full text of my statement will be circulated in the Hall.

Relevance on the ground must be our first peacebuilding requirement. As Jan Eliasson, one of the President's predecessors, said at the inaugural meeting of the Peacebuilding Commission, it is in the country-specific settings that the work of the Peacebuilding Commission will ultimately be judged.

To make a difference on the ground, it is essential to rally all those who can make a difference in our work. That includes Member States of the United Nations, institutional donors and non-State actors. Civil society, media, the private sector and other stakeholders play an important part in consolidating peace in any given country. We need to find ways to further include these actors in our work. It is my strong hope that, in its second year, the Commission will spend more time on outreach activities, so that the peacebuilding agenda will have even broader ownership when we take stock of where we are one year from now.

A well-functioning peacebuilding architecture is our second peacebuilding requirement. Let me through the President, take this opportunity to commend Assistant Secretary-General McAskie and the other members of Peacebuilding Support Office for their work in support of the Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund. The role of the Peacebuilding Support Office as a focal point and coordinator for peacebuilding within the United Nations system at the strategic level is an important element in the peacebuilding architecture. We encourage the Peacebuilding Support Office, working in cooperation with other parts of the United Nations system, to continue to clarify the role of the Office in this regard. It is also imperative that the Peacebuilding Support Office be fully funded from the regular budget.

It goes without saying that the new peacebuilding architecture must not duplicate what already exists. United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies have, and will continue to have, well-defined responsibilities. We value their contributions and call for their continued support.

Norway welcomes the Secretary-General's report (A/62/138) on the Peacebuilding Fund. The Fund will not live up to its expectations unless it has a distinct catalytic role in terms of short-term gap-filling and longer-term resource mobilization. The Peacebuilding Commission and the Secretary-General, along with the countries concerned, must consider how this aspect can be better addressed.

Continued attention to needs in Burundi and Sierra Leone, while opening the door for others, is the third requirement. It is our view that peacebuilding in Sierra Leone and Burundi is now more of a priority — nationally as well as internationally — than it was one year ago. Our attention on these two counties must remain strong and focused in the year to come. Simultaneously, the Peacebuilding Commission must open the door to other countries. However, we will have to realize that not too many countries can be on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission at a given time. Moreover, the involvement of the Peacebuilding Commission can be in parallel to a peacekeeping operation: it is not an issue of either-or but, instead, of complementarity. This is something for the Security Council to take into account.

National ownership is the fourth requirement. In this connection, I want to refer to the Peacebuilding Commission's involvement with Burundi. I am humbled and honoured to have been the Vice-Chairperson of the Commission in its first year. I would like to thank the members of the Commission for entrusting me with the chairmanship of the Commission's work on Burundi for yet another year.

It was a pleasure to work with the Government of Burundi during that time. It was particularly impressive that the Government worked so closely and effectively with the Commission to conclude the Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding in Burundi in June of this year. I would also like to express my gratitude to Youssef Mahmoud, Executive Representative of the Secretary-General, and his team in the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi. We were equally pleased with the consultative process in Burundi during the development of the Strategic Framework, as well as with the active participation of a variety of stakeholders.

We must never forget that Burundians have ownership over the consolidation of peace in their country. The Peacebuilding Commission is an advisory body. Its job is to provide support and advice, never to take over national efforts.

Flexibility in working methods is the last requirement for achieving success in peacebuilding. Peacebuilding is a multifaceted undertaking and therefore has an impact on how we conduct our work. The Peacebuilding Commission has set a new standard in the areas of international partnership and honest dialogue. This would not have been possible without close cooperation with the Governments and United Nations missions in the countries on the Commission's agenda, or without the collective determination of all members of the Commission to contribute to the consolidation of peace. It is not only a matter of doing things better; it is also about doing things differently. Peacebuilding is a challenge to the traditional intergovernmental way of doing business. Our challenges on the ground are concrete. As we have already done, we must value flexibility and pragmatism in our approach to peacebuilding.

The Peacebuilding Commission offers us new opportunities to support peace and a better future for people in post-conflict countries. Momentum has now been created, to which we must all contribute if we wish to maintain it.

Mr. Hoscheit (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): This debate, which we welcome, is the first opportunity since the debates held at the beginning of February in the General Assembly and the Security Council to assess the work of the Peacebuilding Commission since its establishment and the beginning of its functioning.

Luxembourg fully associates itself with the statement made this morning by the Permanent Representative of Portugal on behalf of the European Union. We would like to make a few additional comments in our capacity as a member of the Peacebuilding Commission.

As Luxembourg's Minister for Cooperation and Humanitarian Action said before the General Assembly in February (see A/61/PV.86), the real struggle for peace begins when the fighting is over. In saying that, the Minister drew attention to the complex and multidimensional nature of the peacebuilding process, whose scope goes far beyond just the end of confrontation.

Breaking the cycle of violence by addressing the underlying causes of conflict in the long term and involving the principal national and international actors was the noble ambition that led the heads of State and Government of the entire world, in September 2005, to decide to establish a new body: the Peacebuilding Commission. Our debate today is an opportunity to determine how much ground has been covered since then and to chart the next phase of the development of the ground-breaking Peacebuilding Commission.

As set out in the two reports before us today (A/62/137 and A/62/138), 2006 was essentially devoted to the establishment and initial functioning of the Commission, the Peacebuilding Fund and the Peacebuilding Support Office — the latter headed with skill and dedication by Assistant Secretary-General Carolyn McAskie. That work was essential, however tedious it might have seemed at times, for there was a need to devise original structures and ways of doing things that were in line with both the innovative nature of the mandate entrusted to the Peacebuilding Commission and the demands for efficiency and speed that accompanied the birth of that new body. A genuine peacebuilding architecture has thereby gradually been established. That eloquently attests to the capacity for

innovation and modernization that the United Nations can demonstrate when it is inspired by strong and unanimous political determination on the part of Member States.

Since its inception, the Peacebuilding Commission has developed a relationship of dialogue and openness with all international and governmental actors and representatives of civil society, working together in a synergistic way to make it possible for the Commission to play its role fully and fulfil its new and complex mandate. The Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Support Office have thereby found their place in the United Nations system, with peacebuilding issues being increasingly taken into account by the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and in the operational activities of funds and programmes. That development must be consolidated and strengthened, as, here too, the concept of United Nations system-wide coherence should not be a dead letter.

In that context, I would also like to welcome the absolutely crucial contribution of representatives from civil society and, in particular, non-governmental organizations, whose efforts are essential in defining, implementing and following up peacebuilding strategies.

Lastly, we cannot fail to emphasize the crucial role that can, and must, be played by international financial organizations and regional organizations. I am confident that appropriate arrangements will soon be identified to allow the European Union to find its proper place in the Commission's work as a major international actor deeply involved in the management of conflict and post-conflict situations throughout the world.

The establishment of a real peacebuilding architecture — which, as needed, will have to be further developed and adapted according to operational needs — is only meaningful in terms of the concrete implementation of its mandate vis-à-vis very specific post-crisis situations. That is why there is a need to quickly begin interaction with the first two countries on the Commission's agenda: Burundi and Sierra Leone.

Together, we have made remarkable progress. By formulating integrated peacebuilding strategies with those countries, we now have a much more precise and focused understanding of the numerous complex stakes involved in peacebuilding, as well as of the significant challenges facing actors involved in peacebuilding efforts on a daily basis. By adopting a pragmatic empirical approach that included respect and was based on the principles of national ownership and partnership, in its country-specific configurations the Peacebuilding Commission has made progress in carrying out a dialogue with governmental authorities of the countries concerned and other interlocutors on the adoption of integrated strategies. In what amounts to a contract of trust between the Peacebuilding Commission and the two countries, each partner must now fully assume its responsibilities and meet its commitments for as long as necessary to prevent the recurrence of any sort of violent confrontation.

In order to support and strengthen the process as it moves ahead, we must put in place follow-up and monitoring mechanisms that are both flexible and effective. They should be based on a limited number of quantitative and qualitative indicators making it possible to evaluate the progress made towards peacebuilding and, if necessary, to identify at an early stage potential negative developments that could jeopardize such progress.

The joint use of the means at the disposal of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Peacebuilding Fund and, if necessary, the international community, should make it possible to identify and remedy possible gaps. In that connection, we should more precisely define the respective roles of the Commission and the Fund in order to better sequence their respective efforts.

Although the Peacebuilding Commission's commitment to Burundi and Sierra Leone should continue as long as necessary, it seems to me that the time has come to expand the Commission's work to include other States. I am certain that, with the active support of the Peacebuilding Support Office, the Commission — given its unique integrated character — now has available to it the experience and tools necessary to take up other cases. Of course, we must also provide the Peacebuilding Support Office with adequate resources to carry out its various tasks under favourable conditions.

Although the question of managing conflict and post-conflict situations has been a traditional part of our foreign policy — both in our national capacity and as part of the European Union — Luxembourg has nevertheless been proud to be associated with this

genuine adventure in peacebuilding since the beginning of this year. It is therefore with conviction and enthusiasm that my country has been involved in the various efforts of the Peacebuilding Commission and has made contributions to the Peacebuilding Fund. Luxembourg also announced a contribution of €1 million at the development partners' round table held at Bujumbura at the end of May 2007.

Experience in the course of the first year of the functioning of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund reinforces our belief that the peacebuilding efforts of the United Nations, including the Commission's integrated and multidimensional approach, address a genuine need and provide an appropriate, tailored and innovative response to the numerous challenges posed by peacebuilding.

Much more remains to be done, both in New York and in the field. I wish Ambassador Takasu, the new Chairperson of the Commission, every success. He referred today to some of the issues that the Peacebuilding Commission will have to address in the coming months. I firmly believe that by adopting a pragmatic approach focused on producing concrete results, marshalling positive inputs from various sources and avoiding traditional United Nations bureaucratic tangles and bad habits, much can be achieved. That is Luxembourg's confident hope as we begin the second year of existence of the Commission and the Fund.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.

United Nations A/62/PV.24

General Assembly

Sixty-second session

Official Records

24th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 10 October 2007, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kerim ..... (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Ileka (Democratic Republic of the Congo), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda items 10 and 110 (*continued*)

Report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/62/137)

Report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/62/138)

Mr. Chávez (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Peru has followed with great interest the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Peacebuilding Fund and the Peacebuilding Support Office. These bodies make up a new structure within the United Nations.

Like other members of the international community, Peru attaches great importance to the effective work of the new intergovernmental advisory body, namely the Peacebuilding Commission. We would like thus to congratulate Ambassador Ismael Gaspar Martins of Angola for spearheading the initial work of the Organizational Committee and of the Commission as a whole during the launch phase. He has shown great tact and care in achieving that. We wish the fullest success to the Permanent Representative of Japan as Chair of the Commission during his term.

The Commission fills a vacuum within the Organization, allowing countries that have experienced situations of conflict to build a period of stability and sustainable peace. The Peacebuilding Commission is much more than just a coordination body. Its real importance lies in its objective of adopting integrated peacebuilding strategies that coordinate the efforts of national, regional and international actors. These integrated strategies should be monitored on the ground using quantitative and qualitative indicators, with active participation, since they are primarily responsible for these activities, of the authorities and society of the country included on the agenda. Thus, as the Commission has seen during its first year of work, appreciation of the priorities of the beneficiary country itself is of major importance.

The absence of a culture of peace, the prevalence of violence and arbitrariness in the exercise of power, exclusion of the most vulnerable and of minorities and, in general, the tendency to be motivated only by the instinct for survival are characteristics that become permanent and structural in the context of prolonged conflict. To counter that situation, it is necessary to rebuild the social fabric and generate new democratic values of tolerance and participation, reaffirming in the minds of the people the notion that security and quality of life can be truly rooted only in peace.

The various spheres of peacebuilding make up an interrelated, multidimensional whole that must be dealt with care in each individual case. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, national reconciliation, reform of the justice and security sectors, improvement of public management and proper use of natural resources, inter alia, must be tackled as soon as the phase of overcoming violence has been achieved, even while peacekeeping operations

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are in place and when an appropriate level of stabilization has been reached.

After having moved forward in the area of regulations, procedures and methodologies of peacebuilding with reference to countries on its agenda and having taken important steps towards the adoption of provisional guidelines for the participation of civil society, the Commission must constantly strive to improve coordination within the United Nations and other bodies within the system, as befits a constructive and cooperative relationship. Indeed, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council have, within their mandates, specific roles in terms of peacebuilding. The very valid example of this constant link has been the case of Burundi, where the Security Council has received recommendations and early warning of a very specific nature. We feel that it is necessary to continue to work along these lines.

The delegation of Peru is following with interest the cases of Sierra Leone and Burundi, which are currently on the Commission's agenda. We sincerely hope that these endeavours will be successful, because this is a very important objective that will serve as a valuable precedent when considering the incorporation of other countries. In this regard, we welcome the endeavours of the representatives of the Netherlands and Norway, chairmen of the respective country-specific configurations for Sierra Leone and Burundi, and also the commitment of the Governments of Burundi and Sierra Leone to peacebuilding in their respective countries.

A key task of the Commission is to identify the critical problems relating to peacebuilding, which are linked, in a general manner, to the deep-rooted causes of respective conflicts. Failure to address these problems could lead to a resurgence of violence and to disintegration. As a result of its first months of work and the valuable information emanating from missions in the field, the Commission drew up a strategic framework for Burundi. Advances in identifying critical areas with a view to drafting an integrated strategy are also important in the case of Sierra Leone, which has just successfully held its presidential and parliamentary elections. Next comes the period of shaping the final integrated peacebuilding strategy and, what is perhaps more difficult, the strengthening of the Commission's impact on the ground. That is essential and requires not only long-term action, but also short-term projects with a tangible, rapid effect that will generate confidence in the population.

The endeavours of the Commission call for the support of actors outside the United Nations. Here we should draw attention to the active participation of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the European Union and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. It is also important to persuade private enterprise, both national and transnational, of the need to participate in international endeavours to rebuild countries, enhancing the potential that the reconstruction process signifies for them.

Peru also welcomes the initiatives intended to promote and appropriately disseminate the work of the Commission, promoting greater participation of civil society organizations and greater impact of their work on the ground.

There can be no lasting peace, if it does not go hand in hand, from an early stage, with democracy, social inclusion, soundness of institutions and a sustainable economy. Security, development and human rights are closely interlinked. In short, this is the spirit with which my country works in its commitment to strengthening through constructive initiatives the new peacebuilding architecture of the United Nations.

In this belief, Peru, committed unfailingly to strengthening multilateralism and peacekeeping, is a candidate to become a member of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission for the period 2009-2011. We undertake to continue to contribute within the Commission to the achievement of these lofty ideals.

Ms. Graham (New Zealand): New Zealand strongly supports the role of the Peacebuilding Commission in coordinating and integrating post-conflict peacebuilding activities. The Commission has always been an integral component of the wider United Nations reform agenda. Following its establishment, we are hopeful that a more comprehensive response to post-conflict situations will be possible, resulting in lasting peace.

In the two years since world leaders agreed to establish the Peacebuilding Commission, solid progress has been made in getting this new body up and running and on building the support architecture — the Fund and the Support Office. We are pleased to note that

operations in Burundi and Sierra Leone are already well underway, following the referrals of those two countries to the Commission in 2006. But the Commission remains in its infancy. Only once the outcomes of initial projects begin to be evident will it be possible to draw some conclusions about the efficacy of the Commission's work.

Looking ahead, we recognize that the key to the body's long-term success is its ability to achieve demonstrable results in its actual operations. In that respect, New Zealand is particularly interested in the interaction between the Peacebuilding Commission's activities and those of the United Nations and other agencies working in the field.

Building capacity in post-conflict situations is not an activity the United Nations can achieve alone. The engagement of local authorities, as well as the involvement of civil society elements, both in country and in New York, in the Commission's activities, will be critical to its success. Even more important will be ensuring coordination and coherence with other aid agencies and international organizations on the ground. Greater information exchange between partners in the field, donors and Commission members will continue to be integral in building the continued confidence and support of the wider United Nations membership. In addition, New Zealand hopes that the rolling out of the "one United Nations" initiative, as part of efforts to improve system-wide coherence of the United Nations at the country level, will further enhance the operations of the body.

This year holds particular challenges for the Peacebuilding Commission, and we welcome the appointment of Japan as the new Chair. Japan will play a key role in shaping the future direction and focus of this body. As the year progresses, a key challenge facing the Commission will be to ensure that it has clarity of purpose and a good understanding of the environment on the ground before taking on new countries. New Zealand would be wary of moving on to new countries without a clear understanding of the lessons learned from the first phases of the Burundi and Sierra Leone operations.

New Zealand continues to support United Nations efforts in assisting young and fragile States achieving peace and prosperity. Like the United Nations, New Zealand has a long history of involvement in the State-building process in Timor-Leste and is committed to its success. As last year's events demonstrated, however, the road to stability and development is not going to be quick or short of challenges. We hope the commitment of the United Nations will be sustained over the long term. There may eventually be a supporting role for the Peacebuilding Commission, provided such assistance is considered appropriate.

As said earlier, a further challenge for the Commission will be to strive to deliver concrete results in its first two countries. In order to meet the expectations of the membership, comprehensive efforts and partnerships will be required in the transition from war to peace. New Zealand will continue to follow the Commission's progress in this regard.

Mrs. Viotti (Brazil): Over the past year, the Peacebuilding Commission has achieved important results. The task before us one year ago was certainly not an easy one: setting up a whole new body, with its own rules, procedures and functions, in an area of critical relevance to post-conflict countries.

This is why I would like, first and foremost, to commend the Angolan Presidency, in the person of Ambassador Gaspar Martins and his team, for their excellent work in leading the Commission through the initial stages, when its very foundations were being built.

Brazil is certain that the Japanese Presidency will guide the Commission to even more ambitious achievements. Let me again say how pleased we are to see Ambassador Takasu at the helm of this important body and, once more, pledge our full support to him in the discharge of his responsibilities.

The reports on the Peacebuilding Commission and on the Peacebuilding Fund provide an accurate account of the main activities of the Commission, as well as of the most important issues that need to be tackled from now onwards.

Brazil acknowledges the progress made in setting up the United Nations peacebuilding architecture. Under the Dutch coordination, we have been engaged in defining the basic parameters that will steer our involvement with Sierra Leone. Under the coordination of Norway, we have agreed on an integrated peacebuilding strategy, which has proven to be a useful guide in the path towards consolidating peace in Burundi.

Yet much remains to be done. The Commission must consolidate its identity as an important body in the United Nations family, with its own niche and mandate. It will need to prove its added value as an instrument capable of mobilizing resources and galvanizing relevant partners into action. The Commission must not run the risk of being seen merely as another body in an already crowded aid architecture — nor must it be seen as an institution devoted to conceptual discussions that may never come to fruition. Particular attention should be given, in this context, to the need to strengthen coordination with other United Nations bodies and the Bretton Woods institutions. Success will be measured by the Commission's ability to bring about concrete benefits to the countries under its consideration.

Therefore, when it comes to conceiving a monitoring and tracking mechanism for the Commission's strategies, one must be very cautious not to place additional burden — either financial or bureaucratic — on benefiting countries. Such monitoring mechanisms should also focus on the commitments made by donors and partners, in order to assure that our joint efforts will actually be translated into tangible outcomes.

Brazil supports the issuance of periodic statements and recommendations in specific circumstances — as we did in the case of Sierra Leone's elections and in the face of recent developments in Burundi. The Peacebuilding Commission should have the flexibility to react, in various forms, as events unfold in countries on its agenda. By doing so, the Commission actually operates as a useful early warning system to ward off any deterioration in the security or political situation on the ground.

Let me also take this opportunity to commend the performance of the Peacebuilding Fund over the past months. The projects already approved for Burundi and Sierra Leone can serve as a means of leveraging further investments in areas of crucial importance for the peacebuilding process. Brazil also welcomes the establishment of an emergency window facility, which endows the Commission with the necessary agility to respond in urgent situations.

We welcome the recent announcement by the Secretary-General that Liberia will also be eligible for the Peacebuilding Fund. We hope that resources for other countries that are currently not on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission, such as Haiti, could be made available as soon as possible.

While bearing in mind the clear distinction between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund, it is important to consider innovative ideas to enhance dialogue between them. Members should become more familiar with the projects being financed by the Peacebuilding Fund, in line with the priorities set forth by the integrated peacebuilding strategies and the priorities defined by Governments in benefiting countries.

Brazil supports the consideration of new countries by the Commission. It is our understanding that the Commission is ready to grow. It should be able to deal with other situations that require its attention and action. In order to do so, however, it is important that the working methods are rendered more expeditious and result-oriented. Needless to say, the Peacebuilding Support Office should be structured in a way that is compatible with such mounting demands. In particular, we strongly support the inclusion of Guinea-Bissau in the Commission's agenda. Its nascent political stability and its efforts towards economic reconstruction need the attention and the support of the international community. The Commission should stand by Guinea-Bissau and address the priorities identified by its own people and its own Government.

Peacebuilding is a rather complex undertaking, which gathers a wide array of actors both on the ground and abroad. The issue of coordination in developing recovery strategies therefore stands as a vital one. Brazil believes that the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council should pool their efforts to provide the Peacebuilding Commission with sufficient authority to properly discharge its functions.

Brazil also endorses the view that a successful approach to peacebuilding requires our focused and continuous attention on the strengthening of national institutions, the promotion of reconciliation, reform of the justice and security sectors and the advancement of human rights, among other crucially important activities. Those efforts, however, should be accompanied by actions to promote sustainable economic and social development.

Inspired by the International Labour Organization's well-known maxim, one could say that poverty

anywhere is a threat to peace and prosperity everywhere. Where poverty reigns, countries find it difficult to maintain stability. The Commission's work should therefore allow for the generation of wealth, employment and new opportunities — so that the countries on its agenda may be able to walk their own path towards peace and prosperity.

Mr. Palouš (Czech Republic): The Czech Republic fully aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union presidency, and I would like to make a few additional observations.

The creation of the Peacebuilding Commission was one of the most important results of the United Nations reform foreseen by 2005 World Summit Outcome Document (resolution 60/2). The first report on its work and activities (A/62/137) documents the important work accomplished during the first year of existence of the Peacebuilding Commission. The Czech Republic has the privilege to serve as a member of the Peacebuilding Commission since the beginning of this year and took an active part in the Peacebuilding Commission's work.

I take this opportunity to congratulate Ambassador Ismael Gaspar Martins of Angola for his work as the first Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission. Under his guidance the Peacebuilding Commission has achieved many important results. My delegation is fully confident that his successor, Ambassador Yukio Takasu of Japan, will further develop this sound foundation.

My country has contributed to the Peacebuilding Fund, and we are happy that the first projects financed from the Fund are being implemented. In the future we would appreciate a more prompt reaction of the Fund to the situation on the ground and more efficient cooperation between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund based on the regular exchange of information.

Peacebuilding is a very broad process comprising the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the entire socio-economic basis. It includes urgent political tasks to restore the rule of law, including security-sector reform, to initiate economic reform, and also to develop the educational and health systems. The whole United Nations system, including United Nations programmes and United Nations specialized agencies like UNESCO, the World Health Organization, the International Labour Organization and others must take an active part in those efforts. The United Nations system has to perform as one in the countries on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission. One of the most urgent tasks of the Peacebuilding Commission in the near future will be promoting cooperation within the United Nations system as a whole.

The Czech Republic regards security sector reform as a very important part of the peacebuilding process. It is not possible to start economic and social recovery without reforming the security sector and without creating stable conditions for developing a democratic society and the rule of law. Demobilization and the fight against illicit small arms and light weapons are crucial. The Czech Republic has recently provided a voluntary contribution of $100,000 for the regional workshop for African countries that will be organized by the Office for Disarmament Affairs in December this year in Addis Ababa. The workshop is part of a broad project aimed at capacity-building for the implementation of the international instrument on tracing illicit small arms and light weapons. The financial contribution of the Czech Republic is part of its long-term cooperation with the United Nations which will also continue in the future.

The Peacebuilding Commission during the first year of its existence devoted close attention to the two countries on its agenda: Burundi and Sierra Leone. We highly appreciate the immense work of the Chairs of the country-specific configurations, Ambassador Johan Løvald and Ambassador Frank Majoor.

Now is time to add other countries to the agenda. Guinea-Bissau, Timor-Leste and Haiti are countries mentioned in that connection. In deciding which countries should be put on the agenda, we shall take into consideration the real needs of the countries, their actual situation and the role that the Peacebuilding Commission can play in their peacebuilding efforts. Our decision should not be limited by the organizational capacities of the Peacebuilding Commission but has to be based on the real needs of the respective countries.

One year is too short a period to make a thorough and final evaluation. Our expectations for the work of the Peacebuilding Commission were very high, and not everything we hoped for was achieved during the first year. But we must be realistic. The Peacebuilding Commission has just started its work and was obliged to deal with such necessary organizational tasks as

defining its working methods, adopting rules of procedures and determining guidelines for participation of civil society. We hope that in the near future the Peacebuilding Commission will also find modalities to allow the full participation of entities such as the European Community in its meetings, thereby ensuring the full involvement of this biggest donor in the peacebuilding activities.

The Peacebuilding Commission is now in a much better position to concentrate its work on the real needs of the respective countries and their peoples. Therefore we look to the future with a lot of optimism. We are convinced that the Peacebuilding Commission will soon clearly demonstrate its whole potential, to the benefit of the people on the ground.

Mr. Mantovani (Italy): Italy wishes to thank the President of the General Assembly for organizing this joint debate, which offers an opportunity to enhance the dialogue between Member States on the work and perspective of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund.

Italy aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union presidency and wishes to focus on several further issues that may help point the debate towards concrete steps to take.

Thanks to the efforts of the Chairs, first Angola and then Japan, we may now verify the concrete achievements of the Commission in this very first year of activity. Beginnings are never easy, but the Commission has succeeded in building up its own credibility by adopting rules and working methods, developing implementation strategies for countries on the agenda and involving all the stakeholders by bringing them together and working towards the same goals in order to avoid the wasting of resources and overlapping of programmes.

In this regard, we stress the importance of having included the European Community, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the Organization of the Islamic Conference in the country-specific configurations, and we look forward now to a solution for the adequate representation of the European Union.

In the stabilization processes, the involvement of civil society is imperative. After the adoption of the guidelines for its participation in the Commission's work, we now expect an active policy that may enhance and smooth the relationship.

We wish to express our gratitude to the Netherlands and Norway in their capacity as Chairs and Coordinators of the country-specific configurations, which have promoted the work towards the adoption of the integrated peacebuilding strategies. We must now work to develop a monitoring and tracking mechanism for the mutual engagements and trends of the peacebuilding process, enhancing the participation of regional and subregional organizations.

By commending the efforts by El Salvador as Chair of the Working Group on Lessons Learned, we wish to underline the great potential this Group has in helping the Commission to better coordinate its work by fine-tuning the subjects addressed.

One year on, we are ready to move forward, building on what we have achieved and addressing new challenges in a creative and flexible way that may help in developing policies to fit different situations.

The Commission should now live up to the ambitions that inspired its creation and articulate a richer and varied agenda by looking at peace processes as a whole. We cannot establish peacekeeping missions without envisaging, from the beginning, peacebuilding strategies. What I mean is that the Commission should start reflecting on how to improve its approach towards the entire process by assuming a more proactive role, within a wider radar screen, so to say, in order to better assure the continuity of what is being done, and is intended to be done, by the international community in order to stabilize a country. In line with such an approach, the Commission might become a sort of permanent observatory for new countries that are on their way to exiting the immediate conflict phase, and working together with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department for Political Affairs, the Peacebuilding Support Office and the entire United Nations system in order to be ready, when requested, to address critical situations. This should be done instead of simply waiting until those situations are placed before the Commission, as is now the case, which results in a loss of time and, therefore, effectiveness and efficacy.

The entire process that has the Commission at its core should be conceived of as a relay race between all the actors involved. If we do not think in terms of integrated planning processes, we risk failing, wasting our efforts and reverting to conflict.

Finally, the Commission is more than a donor conference. If it is true that resources are dramatically needed, it is even more important to ensure the best use possible for those resources and to try to achieve predictable financing for medium- and long-term interventions.

The use of the Peacebuilding Fund may help fill some gaps. There must be complementarity with the Commission's strategic objectives, but we are aware that the two bodies are different instruments and one does not replace the other.

Mrs. Mladineo (Croatia): Allow me to start by saying that it has been an honour for my country to serve as a member of the Peacebuilding Commission at its first session. Right from the beginning, Croatia took a leading role, along with other friends of the initiative, in advocating the case for the establishment of the Commission as an effective and transparent body on which all Member States would have a chance to serve. We believed at that time, and we still believe now, that, prior to the establishment of the Commission, a vital tool was missing from the arsenal of the United Nations. Now, along with the Peacebuilding Fund and Peacebuilding Support Office, the Commission constitutes the indispensable peacebuilding architecture of the United Nations.

Croatia would like to stress that it aligns itself with the extensive and substantive statement of the European Union, but we also want to express some of our own views on the Commission's achievements in the past year.

Today, in the General Assembly, we have in front of us for the first time the report of the Commission and the report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund. As a very active member of the Commission, we believe that the report reflects accurately the atmosphere of cooperation and achievements of the Commission's first year. We were of the view that the report should not be a mere factual record of our meetings, but rather a document recording our achievements and identifying the challenges that lie ahead of us.

The first year of work covered new ground in trying to bring more coherence and coordination to peacebuilding, especially through its impact on the ground for the two countries currently on its agenda, Burundi and Sierra Leone. It has not been easy, as we have been faced with both institutional and substantive challenges.

A number of things have been accomplished, though. The Commission established its rules and procedures, guidelines for the participation of civil society in its work and a variety of methods for the conduct of its work. But, above all, the Commission adopted the first United Nations peacebuilding document, the Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding in Burundi, and it is well on its way to finalizing the Sierra Leone compact.

It has succeeded in mobilizing all stakeholders in Burundi and Sierra Leone around the priorities that have been established for the peacebuilding process in both countries. This has been a major achievement, because national ownership with all partners and stakeholders involved is a key to successful peacebuilding and sustainable development.

However, much still remains to be done. The Commission needs to develop tracking and monitoring mechanisms to measure the implementation of integrated peacebuilding strategies. To accomplish this, a complete mapping of existing and planned activities of all partners should be carried out. For this to succeed, it is essential that all peacebuilding efforts be harmonized. During our one-year tenure, we have recognized the importance of field missions and we should consider ways of financing them. Keeping in mind our own experience, we supported the Working Group on Lessons Learned. It is another important forum, which gives Commission members a chance to share experiences. This practice should be continued and further developed in order to help countries on the Commission's agenda. We can also never stress enough that the coordination of other United Nations bodies and of Bretton Woods institutions and regional and subregional organizations with the Commission is of the utmost importance.

Let me now turn to the Peacebuilding Fund. Croatia was one of the Fund's co-founders and is honoured to have a member on its Advisory Board. We are very happy to see that the first disbursements have started and that the first successful meeting of the Advisory Board took place in September. We are of the view that contributions to the Fund should continue in a predictable way in order to reach the mark of $250 million in funding. Croatia will certainly continue contributing to the extent possible. We hope that

disbursement mechanisms will be improved so that the Fund can fulfil its role as a catalyst for emergency funding. However, long-term funding has to come from other sources.

It was only a year ago that the Peacebuilding Commission started its work. We strongly believe it has achieved much for a new United Nations body. It covers territory where many countries have different understandings of what the purpose of such a body should be. A lot of positive energy and understanding, however, has been invested in ensuring its good and productive start. We are among those who strongly believe in the results-oriented work of the Peacebuilding Commission, and we are among those that are painfully aware of how difficult that goal is. This is why our assessment of the first year of the Peacebuilding Commission's work is positive: because we believe that it has started in the right direction by making a real impact and a real difference on the ground.

Even though Croatia is no longer a member of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission, it has remained a member of the country-specific meeting on Burundi and will continue to share its experience and lessons learned in post-conflict recovery and will try to help make a real impact on the ground.

Let me conclude by saying that with the valuable experience of having been a member of the Peacebuilding Commission in its first year, we are ready to use that experience in other United Nations contexts, such as the Security Council, for a seat on which Croatia is running in the next week's election.

Mr. McNee (Canada): Canada is a strong supporter of the Peacebuilding Commission and believes it has a critical role to play in moving the international community beyond ad hoc peacebuilding efforts. Together, we need to move to more organized and coherent responses to address the needs of post-conflict situations in order to build lasting peace.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Ambassador Gasper Martins of Angola, the outgoing Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission. We thank him for his dedicated work during the Commission's formative phase. We would also like to recognize the work and key role of the Peacebuilding Support Office, under the able leadership of Assistant Secretary-General McAskie. Much has been accomplished in the initial year of operations. As we look ahead, Canada welcomes Japan's chairmanship of the Peacebuilding Commission and looks forward to working with Japan to ensure continued progress.

Canada was very pleased to note that the country-specific meetings in October 2006 on Burundi and Sierra Leone identified key priorities for assistance by the Commission. Both countries were declared eligible for assistance from the Peacebuilding Fund. We are hopeful that the work that the Commission is doing to support the national peacebuilding strategies of Sierra Leone and Burundi will build expertise and develop analytical tools. In short, Canada believes that this work could identify and address, in an integrated manner, key thematic areas for these two post-conflict peacebuilding situations, as well as lessons learned to assist in future peacebuilding. The development of effective monitoring mechanisms will be vital to ensuring the success of these efforts.

We are now about to enter a new phase. Canada hopes that this will involve the extension of the Commission's agenda to other country situations, as well as to other thematic issues. Countries emerging from conflict need to know that there is a venue that can provide them with long-term support across a range of issues. Their interest in the Peacebuilding Commission will be a crucial determinant of its success.

We recognize that this will bring with it new pressures. Canada, therefore, supports an action-oriented, flexible mandate for the Commission, a mandate that can focus on realistic and achievable results. Thematic areas of work should include security sector and justice sector reform, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, gender equality issues, children and armed conflict and the implementation of durable solutions for refugees and internally displaced persons, particularly where they have been displaced for protracted periods.

We were very encouraged when, at the first country-specific meetings on Burundi and Sierra Leone, the Commission reaffirmed the centrality to its work of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security as well as of Council resolutions on children and armed conflict. The Working Group on Lessons Learned should be discussing these thematic issues so that they can be integrated into the work of the Commission.

(*spoke in French*)

Specifically with respect to the report before us today (A/62/137), we welcome the references to the need to strengthen the relevance of peacebuilding strategies as a tool to generate support for peacebuilding in the countries under Commission consideration. We very much support the call for the Commission to engage in further dialogue with all relevant stakeholders, donor countries and the broader United Nations system.

As the work of the Peacebuilding Commission evolves, it is necessary to take a hard look at its functions and mandates to maximize its effectiveness as an intergovernmental body. The Commission is an important component of the wider United Nations reform agenda, including proposed reforms to the international peace and security architecture. This includes efforts to enhance United Nations human rights capacity, to strengthen humanitarian action and to better protect civilian populations. The transition from war to lasting peace requires comprehensive, concerted efforts to prevent a return to conflict and displacement.

We look forward to working with the Peacebuilding Commission in the coming months and years as it works to clarify its role and make a useful contribution to the very important task of building peace in countries emerging from conflict situations.

Mr. Antonio (Angola) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of Ambassador Gaspar Martins, who would have liked to be here at this historic moment were it not for circumstances beyond his control, and on behalf of the Angolan delegation, I would like, at the outset, to say how pleased we are to see you, Sir, presiding over our work. We assure you of the full cooperation of the Angolan delegation.

I would also like to congratulate Ambassador Takasu of Japan on his presentation of the report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/62/137), which faithfully reflects the outcome of the tireless work by the Commission in its two country-specific configurations during the first year of an experience, difficult at times, but also interesting. It was interesting because it enabled the Organization to acquire a new structure which, if we give it the means it needs and continue to give it the same attention, will clearly make a difference in the quest for solutions to the challenges raised by post-conflict situations.

The report (A/62/138) before us today on that important instrument, the Peacebuilding Fund, also deserves our attention. We welcome the impact that the Fund is beginning to have in the field. My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Jamaica on behalf of the caucus of the Non-Aligned Movement in the Peacebuilding Commission.

It will be recalled that, in February this year, Ambassador Ismael Gaspar Martins had the distinct honour to address the Assembly, as Chairman of the Commission, to stress the capital importance of the Peacebuilding Commission, which is a cornerstone of the new United Nations peacebuilding architecture and an important outcome of the reform of our Organization.

During their first year of activities, the three pillars of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture — the Peacebuilding Commission, the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund — were all in a development phase. In particular, that phase was characterized by efforts to establish structures and to introduce innovative working methods, as well as channels for interaction with countries on the agenda, other United Nations bodies, various United Nations departments, donors, non-governmental organizations and the media.

Angola is very honoured to have been Chair of the Commission during that critical phase and to have made its humble contribution to the founding ideas that guided the Commission during that initial stage, thanks to the support of Member States, particularly those belonging to the Commission — the delegations of Norway, El Salvador and the Netherlands — and the support of the Peacebuilding Support Office. We are particularly moved by the very kind words that several delegations have been good enough to say in that regard, particularly about Ambassador Ismael Gaspar Martins, the former Chairman.

The first report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/62/137) attests clearly to the progress made and remaining challenges to be overcome. Indeed, the report is innovative, in addition to being very frank regarding the considerable efforts still necessary to address the challenges to be faced by the Commission. The United Nations peacebuilding architecture has the potential to emerge as an important tool for the

international community in its efforts to prevent countries from relapsing into cycles of conflict.

During the second phase of activities, it is planned that the role and the functions of the various components of the peacebuilding architecture will develop further. It is anticipated that a dynamic and mutually reinforcing relationship among the three pillars of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, as well as between them and other bodies working on the ground, will be fine-tuned.

This debate thus offers all Member States a unique opportunity to contribute to the improvement of the working methods of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, given the interest that we have all had in its establishment within the framework of the reform that we have long sought. Therefore, we must take this opportunity to benefit from the viewpoints and input of all those who can contribute to peacebuilding, particularly countries that have successfully managed post-conflict situations and that have the knowledge and experience necessary for similar situations.

In the view of my delegation, the following elements could be crucial for the future of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund.

First, we must continue to consider national ownership as an important principle for peacebuilding in countries on the Commission's agenda, particularly Burundi and Sierra Leone.

Second, the Commission will have to continue to operate within a flexible, transparent and inclusive framework that promotes the development of partnerships with national, regional and international actors.

Third, the importance of the unique composition of the Peacebuilding Commission will be judged on the basis of the commitment of its members to the cause of peacebuilding and of their contributions to the Commission's activities.

Fourth, while it is essential that the Commission continue to pay particular attention to formulating advice related to peacebuilding in Burundi and Sierra Leone, it needs to consider how it will be able to meet requests from other countries emerging from conflict, through mechanisms established under the Commission's founding resolutions.

Fifth, a year of activities has permitted the Commission to accumulate experience enabling it to begin to think about its working methods and, as a result, about improvements to be made to its provisional rules of procedure.

Sixth, in the context of improving the relationship among the components of the peacebuilding architecture, it is important to redefine the relationship between the Peacebuilding Fund and the Peacebuilding Commission.

Seventh, providing the Peacebuilding Support Office with the financial resources necessary for its functioning must be a concern for all Member States.

Eighth, the flexibility demonstrated in the disbursement of the Peacebuilding Fund's funds for emergency situations — funds that have enabled us to finance a number of activities in Côte d'Ivoire and the Central African Republic — must be encouraged. That flexibility should also serve as an example for narrowing the gap between the Fund's decision-making and its disbursements to the countries concerned.

Ninth, Member States' contributions to the Peacebuilding Fund are proving to be crucial, including for continued flexibility in disbursement for emergency situations.

In conclusion, I should particularly like to wish every success to the Japanese Chair, to the team in the Peacebuilding Support Office and to the delegations of El Salvador, Norway, Ghana and the Netherlands in carrying out their tasks for the Commission. In particular, we assure them of the cooperation of the Angolan delegation. We have fond memories of the Peacebuilding Support Office, with which we had the very great pleasure to share unforgettable moments at the inception of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Mr. Pfanzelter (Austria): Austria welcomes this opportunity to discuss the reports of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund a little more than a year after those organs became operational. The General Assembly can now reflect on the experiences of the past year and on the lessons learned in the work of the Commission.

Austria fully aligns itself with the statement just delivered by the representative of Portugal on behalf of the European Union. I will therefore focus on only two points.

First, Austria attaches special importance to the systematic integration of a gender perspective into all aspects of the work of the Peacebuilding Commission. We believe that gender-specific responses to the challenges of peacebuilding, as well as the systematic participation of women in all aspects of peacebuilding processes, are essential prerequisites for the success and long-term sustainability of peacebuilding efforts. We are heartened by the experience of the past year, which shows that, both within the Peacebuilding Support Office and within the Peacebuilding Commission, there is a high degree of awareness of the need to accord special attention to issues of gender.

Gender mainstreaming, as well as the rights and needs of women and girls, figure in both the Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding in Burundi and the draft framework for cooperation in Sierra Leone. In practice, however, it often seems to be difficult to translate the general recognition of the importance of gender into concrete measures and to commit to their implementation. All stakeholders need to make more efforts not to fall into the post-conflict trap of focusing almost exclusively on the so-called angry young men, while neglecting the needs and rights of women.

Austria believes that in its second year the Peacebuilding Commission needs to do more to ensure that the general commitment to gender mainstreaming is adequately reflected in all documents and strategies emanating from the joint endeavours of all stakeholders.

Secondly, Austria appreciates the establishment of the Peacebuilding Fund as an important complement to the Commission. We believe it can be a very useful tool through its creative approach aimed at filling gaps in immediate post-conflict situations that are not adequately addressed by other mechanisms. We believe that allocations of resources from the Fund need to focus on this core role. Being convinced of the innovative nature the Fund represents and of its usefulness, Austria decided to contribute substantially to the Fund. I am happy to report that Austria is one of the few countries that have already contributed twice to the Peacebuilding Fund, in both 2006 and 2007.

For Austria, contributing to the Fund was a departure from the established mechanisms of development assistance. We are glad to see that Sierra Leone and Burundi were accorded $35 million each. We also attach great importance to the allocation of resources to countries that are not on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission, in accordance with the terms of reference of the Fund. Since the Peacebuilding Fund is institutionally independent of the Commission, allocations from the Fund are not linked to the inscription of a country on the agenda of the Commission. The allocation of financial resources to dialogue processes in Côte d'Ivoire and in the Central African Republic is an important step in this context. Austria hopes to see similar contributions in similar situations in the near future.

Ms. Lisson (Australia): Australia continues to be a strong supporter of the Peacebuilding Commission. We were a key advocate for the establishment of the Commission during the 2005 United Nations World Summit, and we consider the Commission as a key outcome of that Summit. Australia was also one of the first donors to the Peacebuilding Fund.

The Peacebuilding Commission has a critical role to play in post-conflict countries, supporting and coordinating the peacebuilding work of the United Nations and the broader international community in support of countries' own efforts. The Commission is charged with ensuring that our combined efforts are both strategic and coherent. It is designed to fill a critical gap in the architecture of the United Nations.

Establishing the Peacebuilding Commission took time, and understandably, a considerable amount of its activities in the first year were focused on administrative matters. We welcome the adoption of provisional rules of procedure and are pleased that preliminary guidelines for the involvement of civil society have been settled. We are also pleased that arrangements are now in place for the participation of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and other institutional donors.

While such a focus on administrative matters was necessary, we hope this more formative period is now behind us. The focus of the Peacebuilding Commission must now be more fully on how it can best play its role of supporting countries emerging from conflict to lay the foundation for sustainable development.

Australia welcomes the report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/62/137) and the report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/62/138).

In relation to the Peacebuilding Commission, it is positive that the report outlines lessons learned, many of which are focused on how to maximize country ownership and involvement in the post-conflict recovery process. We fully support this focus and welcome the establishment by the Commission of a working group on lessons learned to accumulate best practices and lessons learned on critical peacebuilding issues.

In relation to the Peacebuilding Fund, we are grateful for the analysis not just of the Fund's operation, but also of how it can be improved to ensure efficient, quick and accountable disbursement of funds for peacebuilding activities, in line with the guidelines established for the Fund.

The Secretary-General recognizes there is further work to be done on strengthening the relevance of integrated peacebuilding strategies and coordination with all relevant actors, including those outside of the United Nations system. We consider both to be important and support the Secretary-General in these endeavours.

The relationship between the Commission and other intergovernmental bodies, especially the Security Council, is critical. Good working relationships between all relevant bodies and close collaboration at times will be essential to the success of the Commission. Important also is the role of the Peacebuilding Support Office and the cooperation of all United Nations agencies, funds and programmes in peacebuilding efforts. We urge continued strengthening of coordination of this level also.

Australia considers that a further critical issue for the Peacebuilding Commission is for it to be very clear on the specific value it can add to each country on its agenda. The Commission needs to recognize that its role will be different depending on the specific country needs and the mechanisms, plans and strategies already in place. The Commission must be nimble and responsive to the challenges and needs of each country it considers. An analysis, even after such a relatively short period of operation, of how the Commission is contributing to peacebuilding efforts in Sierra Leone and Burundi would be useful, especially as the Commission begins to consider where it might next focus its attention.

Our hopes and expectations for what the Peacebuilding Commission can deliver are high, as they have been from its conception. We recognize that it is still early days of its operation and that it takes time for any new body to learn and apply lessons and to refine its processes and strategies. However, given the need for the Commission's support, the Commission must learn and improve as quickly as possible to ensure that it is delivering maximum results. Australia stands ready to work with the Commission and other Member States to realize this objective.

Mr. Muñoz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to begin by thanking the President for convening this important debate. Secondly, we would like to congratulate Ambassador Gaspar Martins of Angola for his important work in heading the Peacebuilding Commission during its first year of operation. Also, we would like to wish Ambassador Yukio Takasu, the Commission's current Chairperson, every success and assure him of our collaboration.

Chile welcomes this first report by the Peacebuilding Commission (A/62/137), which reflects not only the activities carried out, but also acknowledges the main obstacles and challenges that remain.

The Commission has successfully emerged from its first year of operation. Of course, there are pending matters, in particular the establishment of a useful and efficient mechanism to track and monitor the framework agreements reached by the Commission with the countries under its consideration.

The principles of national capacity and the priorities identified by the countries themselves continue to be the cornerstones of the Commission's activities on the ground. That allows the Commission's work to become yet another element of the development and recovery policies that national authorities have identified for post-conflict recovery.

Furthermore, the Commission's central role as catalyst for the main stakeholders and the resources made available to countries for their post-conflict strategies continue to be of key importance. The Commission's coordination with the international financial institutions is, we feel, of prime importance, and we support the idea put forth by its Chairman to establish a direct and dynamic link with those bodies.

The report on the Peacebuilding Fund reveals that we have yet to meet the target of $250 million established for its founding. My delegation trusts in the generosity of all, particularly of the developed countries, to reach that sum as soon as possible. The Fund report also draws attention to how that body has been able to take advantage of existing organic structures of the United Nations systems. Indeed, the delegation of responsibility for the fiduciary management of the Fund to the Multi-Donor Trust Fund Office clearly demonstrated how to maximize the benefits of the Organization's current structure without the need to create new mechanisms.

My delegation welcomes the recommendation made in the report relating to the Fund's participation in two post-conflict phases — the first devoted to societies that have recently emerged from conflict and are taking critical and urgent peacebuilding measures, and the second devoted to funding projects pursuant to the strategic frameworks agreed between the Commission and the country under consideration. We can thereby avoid the occasional emergence of frustration over the slow pace of discussions and negotiations between the Commission and the country under consideration.

On the subject of the Peacebuilding Fund, we feel it important to note that prior coordination is required between the Secretary-General and the Commission when the former wishes to declare a country eligible for access to the Fund's resources. Given that this faculty is established in the Fund's terms of reference, we feel it desirable to ensure due coordination between the Organizational Committee and the Commission in order to ensure that other countries are not encouraged to apply directly to the Secretary-General for funds without placing themselves under the Commission's consideration. We recall that the Commission's role transcends the mere delivery of resources; its multifaceted role and its presence on the ground should be encouraged.

Finally, I take this opportunity to express gratitude for the important support work of the Peacebuilding Support Office, without whose cooperation the Commission would be unable to resolve its own organizational problems, and to welcome the establishment of that new United Nations body.

Mr. Staur (Denmark): I thank the President of the General Assembly for providing this opportunity to discuss one of the major achievements of the United Nations reform process — the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission.

I would first of all like to align myself with the statement made by the representative of Portugal on behalf of the European Union. Let me also begin by thanking the Chairmen of the Organizational Committee and the country-specific configurations for their valuable work and for the progress achieved under their leadership.

The creation of the Peacebuilding Commission marked an important milestone for the United Nations. The need to address the difficult process from peace consolidation, humanitarian assistance and early recovery in post-conflict situations, through reconstruction to development, is obvious and difficult. There are no one-size-fits-all solutions for those complicated post-conflict situations.

Building peace is all about building bridges between actors within and outside the country or region in question. At the same time, building peace requires a clear assessment of short-, medium- and long-term needs and a clear commitment from the international community to do its utmost to meet those needs. In other words, the environment in which we have created the Peacebuilding Commission and the mandate we have entrusted it with are indeed complex and difficult, in terms of both the number of different actors involved and the complexities of the issues at hand. The challenges that the Commission is now facing are the same that we have been dealing with for decades, and it is fair to say not without some failures and shortcomings.

Those challenges are close to what we could call the core business of the United Nations itself and a field of challenges that could be considered one of the most strategically important to the United Nations system. In the eyes of the public, building peace and preventing the re-emergence of conflict and war are among the most important yardsticks for measuring the relevance and effectiveness of the United Nations.

Against that background, it is no wonder that we have all had great expectations as to what the Peacebuilding Commission can and should do. Little more than a year into the life of the Commission, we must, however be realistic in trying to evaluate its

work so far. There is a limit to what can realistically be achieved over a short time span. On the other hand, it is important that we address what some consider the shortfalls or challenges of the Peacebuilding Commission, and I would like to highlight a number of those challenges in this statement.

It is an important achievement that the Peacebuilding Commission succeeded in developing and defining the concept of integrated peacebuilding strategies. That has enabled the Commission to draw up the specific Strategic Framework for Burundi as well as the Sierra Leone draft integrated peacebuilding strategy framework for cooperation. The Commission has carried out important field visits and helped set an agenda for peacebuilding, and it has brought stakeholders together locally and internationally.

After a year in which much focus has been on the internal questions and working methods of the Commission, we now need to focus on outward-looking activities and actual progress on the ground. The innovative modalities of the Peacebuilding Commission and its focus at the country level should help it to become a forum inspiring concerted action, rather than being a talking shop with limited influence on the situation on the ground. Hopefully, the agenda of the Organizational Committee will be shorter in the year to come. Emphasis on and support for pragmatic and flexible working methods are crucial.

The capacity, experience and sense of ownership of many non-governmental organizations and other civil society actors are resources that the Commission should draw upon. Likewise, it should draw upon the unique resources of various African institutions and organizations, especially at the field level. National ownership of and regional support for peacebuilding processes are crucial; there is therefore a need for increased activity of the Commission in the field, as opposed to in New York. One of the Commission's unique features is precisely the possibility of bringing together all partners on the ground, including those that disagree and those of civil society.

The PBC would benefit from discussions on how to prioritize the many relevant issues pertaining to peacebuilding. That cannot be done once and for all but would, of course, depend on the specific conditions in the country affected and the situation at hand. The key to priority-setting should be an informed discussion on the prioritizing and sequencing of such issues as good governance, security sector reform, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, human rights, job creation and so on. The Peacebuilding Commission will need to work closely with humanitarian partners, with peacekeeping forces, and with development partners in fleshing out those priorities.

The relationship with the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council should be further developed in the time to come. It seems that all three institutions would benefit from more interaction on specific issues. An example would be the Security Council seeking information and specific advice on peacebuilding matters when deciding on mandates for peacekeeping missions.

A specific challenge for the Peacebuilding Commission is to mainstream and increase its outreach activities. The visibility of the Commission is crucial in maintaining its momentum and in creating increased awareness about its work — both locally and globally. To this end, increased use of the Internet and the drawing up of communications strategies specifically to be used in the countries on the agenda, as well as at the global level, would be useful.

We need to work harder to ensure that the Peacebuilding Commission helps to mobilize and marshal sustained and predictable resources for peacebuilding. We need to define how other countries can be declared eligible for support from the Peacebuilding Fund and to ensure that such funds are available — as intended — to fund gaps at the earliest stages of a recovery process. Progress has been made with regards to disbursements, but there is still some way to go in this regard.

However, this should not deter us from continuing our common endeavours to ensure that the necessary resources are available to the Fund in the future. This availability is crucial if the Fund is to be able to provide rapid-release funds and seed money when new countries are added to the Peacebuilding Commission agenda.

At the same time, we must, of course, remain cognizant of the fact that the Peacebuilding Fund will only cover a minor part of the total costs of peacebuilding in all post-conflict situations and that the bulk of funding will have to be provided through other channels. The various funds and programmes and the international financial institutions, including the World Bank and the African Development Bank, are very

important in this regard, and the Peacebuilding Commission could play a useful role in bringing together these actors in discussions about sustainable funding.

The Peacebuilding Commission should be ready to consider new countries for its agenda. When considering countries for its agenda, priority should be given to countries with a particular need for coordinated international action and additional recovery financing. In dealing with new countries, the lessons learned so far should be drawn upon.

Finally, I would like to underline the importance of the standing invitation extended to the European Union, as an institutional donor, to participate in the meetings of the Peacebuilding Commission. We fully support the arrangement finally being implemented allowing for an adequate representation of the European Union (EU), given the major contributions that the EU makes.

The Peacebuilding Commission has a very real chance of becoming a success, not just in its own right, but for the United Nations as a whole. It definitely highlights the important role that the United Nations system can — and should — play in bridging the gap from early recovery to development. The United Nations system has a unique potential in fulfilling this role and, as Member States, we all have an important obligation to support the United Nations in this regard.

Mr. Cabral (Guinea-Bissau) (*spoke in French*): My delegation is very pleased by the publication of the first report of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Secretary-General's report on the Peacebuilding Fund, which has sparked a debate as interesting as it is informative. I see here the eloquent proof of our commitment to make this Commission a core tool in peacebuilding worldwide.

The unique nature of this Commission is that it is representative of the United Nations as it stands today. The Commission is, in fact, composed of members from the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, as well as countries that contribute the most, those which we call the troop-contributing countries. I believe that when our heads of State adopted the Summit Outcome Document in 2005, we not only raised the major issue of how to ensure that there is no gap between the end of the operations run by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in a given country and the post-conflict situation. There is the need to ensure that post-conflict countries do not fall back into those difficulties that we are only too aware of, back into those tragedies that we have had to overcome in some countries. This tool is, therefore, necessary and was created by the General Assembly.

Today, one year later, all the statements made here this morning, beginning with that of the President of the General Assembly, attest to the approval and the positive assessment given to the Peacebuilding Commission and its work. I would like, then, to thank, here and now, all of those who have contributed, especially the members of the Commission, of course. But, I would like especially to note the remarkable work done by our distinguished colleague, Ambassador Ismael Gaspar Martins of Angola, the first Chair of the Commission. I would like to add that other colleagues, our colleagues from El Salvador as well as our colleague from Norway and, of course, our colleague, Frank Majoor, from the Netherlands, greatly contributed to the success that we are all acclaiming today.

The Peacebuilding Commission is, in reality, our subsidiary body; something new that we ourselves created to enable us to respond in a useful, practical and efficient manner to this necessity to reform the United Nations, to respond to the tragedy that plagues many countries, especially in Africa, tragedies that require not only demonstrations of solidarity, such as we hear in the statements made here, but especially concrete actions that could make a difference and provide hope to the peoples involved.

This is what the Commission has done and this is what the Commission is called upon to do. Obviously, it is not yet all perfect. I believe that the report attests to the determination of the Peacebuilding Commission and its members to ensure that that same energy continues, that through our brainstorming and innovative ideas we will be able to meet challenges and provide concrete results.

I would like to sincerely thank the Peacebuilding Support Office that was created to this end and which has been so excellently led by Ms. McAskie, the Assistant Secretary-General. She and her team have shown imagination, creativity and resolve, because it is not easy to convince Member States, particularly when you are offering something new, new ideas. Very frequently, we are somewhat resistant to new ideas. We wonder whether something will be successful, whether

it will make a difference. Well, in a word, yes. I think this team is a winning team and we need to give it the necessary support. We need to ensure that, together, we will be able to work to meet our commitments, collectively assume our responsibilities.

This is what the Peacebuilding Commission is doing. It is not just another structure, just another subsidiary body of the United Nations. It is something that is useful, something that will contribute to bringing peace to peoples who have been in conflict. Furthermore, it is something that will contribute to giving them hope, especially thanks to the financial contributions that will be made.

But let us not be misled. This is not just a matter of financial support. The role of the Commission is to make sure that we can establish a useful dialogue and partnership with the beneficiary countries, so that we can work hand in hand.

There is also the issue of ownership, which is fundamental. But let us be pragmatic. Ownership is a matter of principle, but it must be assumed in a spirit of partnership because any country emerging from conflict is not a position to undertake every task on its own. That country therefore needs the support of the international community through the Peacebuilding Commission, and specifically the Peacebuilding Support Office. I therefore say yes to ownership in principle, but submit that it needs to be intelligently and pragmatically managed so as to ensure that we can draw the optimal benefit not only from all those present in this Hall who are prepared to help and have indicated their willingness to do so, but above all from the willingness of the members of the Peacebuilding Commission and its Support Office.

I may be wrong, but one might imagine that the Commission could do better. We should not, however, be unduly hasty. I think that, considering that the Commission was so recently created and did not even exist a year ago, it is still trying to find itself. It is finding its own way, I believe, and will soon reach its natural cruising speed. The evidence for that is irrefutable. We have all heard here expressions of satisfaction with the Commission and the Peacebuilding Support Office.

I should therefore like to hope that we, members and non-members alike, will further mobilize ourselves, as well as the international community, to ensure that the Commission can move forward, build on its achievements, be even more innovative, and make effective contributions to building new, peaceful societies and to achieving national reconciliation in the countries involved.

With respect to the Peacebuilding Fund, one would obviously hope that it will be able to disburse more quickly, but judging from the standard procedures of other United Nations organs and bodies, I believe it would not be mistaken to feel that the Fund is working at an acceptable pace. We need to give it time, too, to learn to manage its affairs transparently, because we require transparent management, and to ensure that available funds are disbursed to good effect. That is the key; more important than the pace of disbursement is knowing where the money will go and to what purpose, and ensuring that it will have an impact in terms of building new societies and peace in the countries involved.

I have every confidence in the Fund's managers and in the Secretary-General, and am very pleased that he has decided to declare Liberia eligible. Who here is not in solidarity with Liberia after all the suffering and hardship it has endured? Who here would not agree to abide by the Secretary-General's decision with respect to a country as devastated as Liberia? I think his is a good decision and must be supported. The best way to support it is to invite not only the traditional donor countries, but all of us — including my country — to make a gesture, howsoever symbolic, of contribution to the Fund. That will make a difference and effect important changes, bolstering our claims to be devoted to peace, justice and freedom, and ensuring that the United Nations ideals are not only practiced but are anchored in a culture of peace established throughout the world. That is what we need to do in supporting the Commission, Ms. McAskie and her team, and the Secretary-General so that the Commission can move forward and continue to innovate and so that the effective results enumerated in the current report can be even more satisfactory in the next.

Mr. Pemagbi (Sierra Leone): My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Jamaica on behalf of the members of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission that are members of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The Peacebuilding Commission is a baby that has grown fast. That rapid development is the product of

cooperation by members of the Organizational Committee and its first Chairman, Ambassador Gaspar Martins; an able Support Office with excellent leadership; highly dedicated country-specific meeting chairmen for Burundi and Sierra Leone; and the Ambassador of El Salvador, who has led us with considerable insight in our exploration of experiences and best practices in peacebuilding. Of course, without financial support, the Peacebuilding Commission would have been a stunted baby. Sierra Leone thanks all involved. I assure them that their sacrifice will never be in vain.

Sierra Leone is, of course, one of the two specific countries selected for consideration on the agenda of the new mechanism for post-conflict cooperation. Accordingly, we would like to add a few points to this joint debate on the first year of its operation. Our views should help to throw light on any evaluation of the achievements and lessons learned so far. Hopefully, our intervention will also contribute to forthcoming discussions on the way ahead for both the Commission and the Fund.

From the outset, particularly during the series of consultations on the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission, Sierra Leone has always been curious to know whether and how it would benefit from the Commission. Today, one year after it came into operation, we can confidently say that Sierra Leone has indeed benefited immensely from that innovative mechanism.

In his maiden address to Parliament last Friday, the new President of Sierra Leone, Mr. Ernest Bai Koroma, assured the United Nations that his Government will take full advantage of the opportunities provided by the Peacebuilding Commission. The four priority areas that were identified last year — youth employment and empowerment, justice and security sector reform, good governance and capacity-building — are still valid. They are consistent with the main thrust of the President's policy address to Parliament. For instance, he spoke about a new Sierra Leone where young people will train and work to live productive lives. He also emphasized good governance, civil service reform, justice and the rule of law, and peacebuilding.

In that regard, there should be no doubt whatsoever about the commitment of the new administration in Sierra Leone to the proposed integrated peacebuilding strategy or cooperation framework. The current visit to Sierra Leone by the Chairman of the Sierra Leone country-specific meeting of the Commission, Ambassador Frank Majoor of the Netherlands, is intended to contribute to the process of refining and finalizing the text of the framework for cooperation and partnership between the Government of Sierra Leone and the Peacebuilding Commission.

Meanwhile, we would like to reiterate that national ownership should be the cardinal principle of the cooperation framework. Secondly, due account should be taken of the full scope of the Commission's mandate. In other words, we must not forget that the Commission is also mandated to marshal resources at the disposal of the international community and to help ensure predictable financing, not only for early recovery activities, but also for sustained investment over the medium and long terms.

While we cannot overemphasize the importance of resources through the Peacebuilding Fund, we believe that the new peacebuilding mechanism envisaged by the heads of State and Government in 2005 rests not on one, but on three pillars: the Peacebuilding Commission, the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund. Those three entities must work together and coordinate their activities effectively with other stakeholders, at the country level. Of course, we share the view that the relationship between the Fund and the Commission should be clearly set out, especially to remove the misperception that disbursement of money is the responsibility of the Commission. We note with appreciation the explanation provided in the Secretary-General's report (A/62/138) concerning coordination between the Peacebuilding Fund and other bilateral and multilateral funding mechanisms.

In a country like Sierra Leone, where the line between recovery and development is quite thin, it is not always easy to convince the general public that the Peacebuilding Fund was not designed to reinforce existing national development priorities, but rather was conceived as a flexible mechanism to respond to early or immediate challenges to the peace process.

It is true, as the Secretary-General observes in his report, that the scope of the Peacebuilding Fund as an immediate response mechanism did not fit as neatly in a country like Sierra Leone that has evolved some years beyond the highly fragile immediate post-conflict

environment. However, judging from the positive impact that the Fund has had and is having on the peacebuilding efforts of the country, one can conclude that the Fund has a catalytic role to play at various stages — and I emphasize, "various stages" — of a country's peacebuilding process.

In Sierra Leone, the guns have been silent for over five years. We signed a Peace Agreement in 1999. The country has enjoyed relative peace. Disarmament and demobilization have been completed. The country has been, relatively speaking, at an advanced stage of its peacebuilding process. However, we faced serious challenges that needed immediate attention. We are therefore grateful that the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund responded appropriately. We hope that other countries, especially post-conflict least developed countries at the same or similar stage of the peacebuilding process, may also benefit from the Commission and the Fund.

The report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/62/137) and the Secretary-General's report on the first year of operation of the Peacebuilding Fund (A/62/138) constitute a volume in lessons learned. In other words, we have learned a lot during the past 12 months from the responses of the Commission and the Fund to the situations in Sierra Leone and Burundi.

However, looking ahead to the next phase of the Commission's work, Sierra Leone would like the Commission to have an in-depth policy discussion as soon as possible on the appropriate time for ending its engagement with a country. In other words, how long should Sierra Leone remain on its agenda, taking into account the Commission's mandate to ensure that the country receives the continued attention of the international community?

There are several criteria for measuring the success or effectiveness of this innovative peacebuilding mechanism over the past 12 months. Sierra Leone reiterates that success should be measured on the ground and against the impact that the activities of the Commission and the Fund have had, and will have, on the lives of the people of Sierra Leone, in particular young people, who continue to pose the greatest challenge to the peacebuilding process.

Sierra Leone was a United Nations peacekeeping experiment during its 11-year civil conflict. Today, in its post-conflict phase, Sierra Leone is again a guinea pig for United Nations efforts in supporting the post-conflict recovery process through the work of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund. We have benefited immeasurably from this role, and I am sure the laboratory results have helped, and are helping, the United Nations to redefine its peacebuilding objectives and strategies. Our plea to the United Nations and to all those that have contributed to taking us to where we are today is to continue to help us to sustain the positive results we have yielded and continue to yield.

We believe the Peacebuilding Fund is a kind of emergency fund meant to close critical gaps in the recovery process of countries emerging from conflict. In other words, it is supposed to support national efforts to prevent relapse into conflict and lay a foundation for development. With this understanding, it is advisable for the Commission to studiously minimize bureaucratic delays in its delivery mechanism.

We look forward with heightened hope and expectation to consolidating the cooperation that has been established between the Peacebuilding Commission and Sierra Leone.

Mrs. Gallardo Hernández (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to congratulate the President on convening this debate on the report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/62/137) following its first session. We acknowledge the leadership of the Permanent Representative of Angola as former Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission. We also welcome the Permanent Representative of Japan as new Chairman of the Commission, and we reiterate our best wishes for the success of his term. We would also like to congratulate the Permanent Representatives of Norway and the Netherlands for their work as Chairs of the country-specific configurations on Burundi and Sierra Leone respectively.

A little over a year has elapsed since the Peacebuilding Commission was established in the context of the reform process of the United Nations. The expectations at that time were numerous and wide-ranging. This was reflected in the initial dynamism of the Commission as a new body. It involved consultation among member States and the definition of functions by the Peacebuilding Commission secretariat and the Peacebuilding Fund working group.

We recall that it was also necessary to engage in some measure of strategic planning to ensure that we

were able to carry forward our work in a consistent manner, including the establishment of clear monitoring procedures and action to be taken on the ground. Nonetheless, during this first year, we view the achievements with optimism, although we are well aware of the numerous challenges facing the Commission.

The re-election of El Salvador as a Vice-Chair and its function as coordinator of the Working Group on Lessons Learned demonstrate our commitment to this effort.

Created to fill a gap in the United Nations system and to ease the transition from post-conflict peacekeeping processes to peacebuilding, the Commission, by its composition, adds value to present and future United Nations support to countries that decide to lay down their arms and settle their disputes through dialogue and consultation — all with a view to forging their national development plans.

The presence of donor countries which over recent years have contributed, in the form of economic, technical and financial cooperation, in various countries in a post-conflict situation is paralleled by the presence of countries like El Salvador which have overcome internal violence themselves. We want to contribute through our own experiences in helping to guide the decisions or recommendations that the Peacebuilding Commission may adopt regarding the countries under consideration, namely Sierra Leone and Burundi. Thus, the thing is to incorporate concrete initiatives into a vision shared among the members of the Commission. The first report submitted by the Commission at the end of its first year reflects some progress and achievements, but it also indicates the work that still remains to be done, particularly on the ground.

Indeed, the concrete action of the Commission should really be focused on the ground, because that is where the dividends of peace are really to be felt. In our view, the presence on the ground of members of the Commission through programmed visits is essential in order for the Commission to undertake an analysis and define strategies.

There is the challenge of stepping up coordination with the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, and with the other stakeholders on the ground, who are familiar with the real situation, or with research centres that are working on bolstering peacebuilding endeavours.

El Salvador is of the view that we should also promote the formulation of concrete strategies, as we have done in the cases of Sierra Leone and Burundi, through integrated peacebuilding strategies (IPBS), because that serves to bring added value and to avoid duplicating efforts. The international community expects that the Commission will make a tangible contribution, and why not say so? It should also make some practical recommendations in specific areas or contexts. With that in mind, the Working Group on Lessons Learned, which El Salvador is honoured to lead, has endeavoured to analyse and, through various processes, gather concrete experiences in order to compile a set of lessons learned by the United Nations system working with the international community. When arms are laid down, it becomes necessary to learn a new form of coexistence and join in a shared national development project.

Although each peacebuilding process has its own characteristics, and its success depends, of course, on the political determination of national actors, the implementation of lessons learned must be of benefit to the countries under consideration. We should not forget, therefore, the necessity of creating a historical record that will contribute in the future to helping the United Nations to become more effective in peacebuilding activities.

The modality adopted by the Working Group on Lessons Learned, which uses videoconferences to draw together the actors on the ground and the members of the Commission, reflects the openness and flexibility that must be present in our work.

Indeed, it is an open-ended group, in which all States Members of the United Nations are welcome to participate and make their specific contribution so as to further the quest for lasting solutions on the ground in the countries under consideration.

On the basis of our experience, we feel that, when emerging from an armed conflict, it is essential to bring together a common will to set priorities in the short- and medium-term and to act on the basis of these priorities. We should not forget that, at such times, there are many needs, while national capacity is limited. However, there are some aspects that, if not dealt with promptly, may re-emerge and jeopardize established political agreements among national actors,

including, to mention but a few, opportunities for reinsertion and jobs for former combatants and young people and reform of the security sector. These are subject areas that the Working Group on Lessons Learned has identified and analysed.

From the outset, El Salvador has expressed its firm belief that the Peacebuilding Commission should not be viewed as a body merely for financial cooperation, nor as a mediator between donors and recipient countries. Also, we consider it important for the members of the Commission to be familiar with the areas or programmes to be funded through the Peacebuilding Fund. While it is important to hear the national authorities and their assessment of their own priorities, still the way in which these funds are used on the ground will be more successful if past experiences are also brought to bear.

The reality of our world today shows that no region is exempt from potential conflicts. Therefore, the Peacebuilding Commission should focus its attention on a geographical balance when considering countries. The inclusion of a country or its withdrawal from the Peacebuilding Commission's agenda should be agreed with national authorities. In turn, the incorporation of new countries should take into account the opinion of the members of the Commission.

Lastly, may we thank the secretariat of the Peacebuilding Commission for its support. Within the secretariat there is a geographical balance that enriches the Commission's view with the input of the different regional realities.

Mr. Soler Torrijos (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): May I begin by echoing the thanks of previous speakers for the convening this meeting to consider the report following the first year of work of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund. Secondly, my delegation would also like to extend its congratulations to the outgoing Chairman of the Commission, the Permanent Representative of Angola, and welcome the new incoming Chairman, the Permanent Representative of Japan. We would also like to align ourselves with the statement by the delegation of Jamaica on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, which is part of the Peacebuilding Commission.

As members of this new body and witnesses to the progress that it has made, we welcome the outcome of its first year of work. We have seen how the Commission has proved its effectiveness in gathering funding and to focus the attention of the world on the countries on its agenda. We have also seen how it has played an important role as an intergovernmental observer on governance issues in, for example, the elections in Sierra Leone on 11 August. We have also noted its contributions to the coherence of the United Nations system in this regard with the formulation of the integrated peacebuilding strategies (IPBS). We have also witnessed how it contributed to the operational definition of what peacebuilding really means within the United Nations.

In our view, during this second year, the Commission should focus its endeavours on tackling various concrete challenges, inter alia, defining its working methods, for example, defining when the Commission should drop a country from the agenda; ascertaining the possible contributions of civil society to the work of the Commission; maximizing the impact on the ground in developing follow-up mechanisms to assess the peacebuilding strategies in those countries; defining the operational relationship with other pertinent United Nations bodies, regional organizations and subregional bodies; and defining where it can provide added value to the work of other United Nations bodies. In the case of the Security Council, for instance, we feel that the Commission could play an advisory role in cases requiring early warning. Moreover, we also feel it extremely important that the Commission consider including other countries on its agenda. That, too, would help strengthen its role as coordinator of the United Nations and the international community's efforts to build peace.

In that respect, we feel that Guinea-Bissau's request for inclusion in the Commission's agenda, set out in its letter of 11 July, should be considered. We also believe that it would be appropriate for the Commission and other United Nations bodies to study the criteria for placing a country on the Commission's agenda, which could serve as a reference point for the international community. We feel that the Commission's agenda should maintain a regional balance, pursuant to paragraph 12 of the resolution by which it was established.

In conclusion, we believe that the Commission should redouble its efforts at its second session to ensure effective results on the ground and avoid any backsliding that could occur not for a lack of will, but

because of the need for well-defined working methods and criteria.

Mr. Sangqu (South Africa): We thank the President of the General Assembly for organizing today's debate on the report of the Peacebuilding Commission. South Africa aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

We also wish to thank the first Chairperson of the Organizational Committee, Ambassador Gaspar Martins of Angola, and the chairs of the country-specific configurations for a job well done under their leadership.

The Peacebuilding Commission is the result of the collective will of Member States to create support mechanisms for countries recovering from the devastation of conflicts. The work of the Commission and its dynamic approach are crucial if we are to succeed in our efforts to prevent countries emerging from conflict from relapsing back into conflict. Certainly, those of us in the African continent viewed the establishment of the Commission as an important step in assisting and providing the necessary support to our sister countries in their post-conflict peacebuilding, reconciliation and development endeavours.

The first annual report of the Peacebuilding Commission before us provides a detailed account of the activities of the Commission during the past 12 months. It reflects the collective role played by various members of the Commission and national Governments, and the invaluable contribution made by other stakeholders, such as civil society and the international financial institutions.

South Africa notes with satisfaction the Commission's efforts to provide medium- and long-term peace consolidation advice to countries emerging from conflict situations, as well as funding from the Peacebuilding Fund for peace consolidation projects. With the cases of Sierra Leone and Burundi being examined by the Peacebuilding Commission in their country-specific configurations, the Commission has produced good results indeed.

In its first year under the excellent leadership of Angola, the Commission was able to operate within a flexible framework in developing working relationships with all its partners. In that context, the Commission has adopted provisional rules of procedure, provisional guidelines on the participation of civil society, and country-specific formats to consider the cases of Burundi and Sierra Leone, while processes to develop integrated peacebuilding strategies have been launched.

It is important that the Peacebuilding Commission continue to be driven by Member States. In that context, the Organizational Committee must continue to be the focal point of all the Commission's activities, and its central role must be strengthened. While it is crucial to refine those relationships and the criteria for identifying new areas of work, there is a sense of urgency for the Commission to go beyond procedural concerns to perform its activities fully on the ground.

We believe that, in the year ahead under the able leadership of Japan, the Commission will need to work towards more practical and concrete outcomes from its efforts to promote peace consolidation. The success of the Commission will be judged by its ability to make a real difference to the lives of people in Freetown, Bujumbura and beyond. We believe that the ultimate success of the Commission's work lies in the transformation of all its plans and policies into concrete actions. The main challenge facing it is to maximize its impact on the ground in full alignment, cooperation and accordance with the national Governments' policies and strategies.

South Africa believes that peacebuilding should be based on the principles of national ownership and international partnership. Quick-impact projects and the sufficient injection of predictable resources in a country emerging from conflict are crucial to ensuring stability and development on the ground. For that reason, the invaluable support provided by the donor community to the activities of the Peacebuilding Commission needs to be consolidated and enhanced if we are to succeed in achieving peace, security and development, in particular in the early post-conflict stages.

On the issue of national ownership, we should make sure that the countries emerging from conflict have full ownership of peacebuilding for the benefit of all their people. In that regard, we believe that the concerned countries must be allowed genuine national ownership in identifying priorities for peacebuilding. In addition, while there is no argument that the Peacebuilding Commission has an advisory role, it

should be prepared to listen to the priorities, needs and views of the countries under consideration. After all, the primary clients of the Commission are the countries emerging from conflict.

The Peacebuilding Fund was created for the specific purpose of assisting in the facilitation of peacebuilding activities. In that context, the Fund was understood to be a catalyst for attracting much-needed official development assistance and resources, particularly at a time when there may be little hope of success towards recovery. It is for that reason that we hope that there will be clarity about the role of the Peacebuilding Fund.

Finally, we concur with the view that the Peacebuilding Commission needs to further strengthen its relationship with relevant organs and institutions, including the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, and regional and subregional organizations. In our continent, the African Union continues to play its role in the peacebuilding field, including through the adoption of a post-conflict reconstruction and development policy. In that regard, we hope that, in the year ahead, the Commission will strengthen its cooperation with relevant bodies on the African continent. Actors such as the African Union, the regional economic communities and other agencies, such as the African Development Bank, have a key role to play in all peacebuilding efforts for countries emerging from conflict.

Mr. Christian (Ghana): My delegation wishes to commend Ambassador Gaspar Martins of Angola and his dedicated team, ably supported by the Peacebuilding Support Office led by Assistant Secretary-General Carolyn McAskie, for their contribution and pioneering role in making the Peacebuilding Commission a reality today. We also congratulate Ambassador Takasu of Japan on his election as the new Chairman of the Organizational Committee of the Commission, and wish to assure him of the continued support of Ghana, as a member and Vice-Chair, in addressing the remaining challenges facing the Commission, some of which have been highlighted in its first annual report.

My delegation would also like to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for submitting the first annual report on the Peacebuilding Fund and to commend his efforts in the area of peacebuilding.

We recall that the hybrid creation of the Peacebuilding Commission as an intergovernmental advisory body by concurrent resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council on 20 December 2005 makes it a unique institutional mechanism and the first of its kind in the United Nations. The Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund, which is intended to be separate and independent of the Commission, together constitute two key pillars of the peacebuilding architecture within the United Nations system.

Our debate should not lose sight of the ultimate purpose for which the Peacebuilding Commission was created, which is to mobilize international resources and coordinate the efforts of relevant actors both inside and outside the United Nations family in order to prevent the recurring cycle of violence in countries emerging from conflict, through the adoption of post-conflict peacebuilding strategies to ensure sustainable peace, recovery and development. That entails helping the national or transitional Governments of war-torn or fragile States to rebuild institutions of democratic governance and accountability, to pursue security sector reform and reconciliation and to promote a culture of respect for the rule of law and human rights.

At the same time, the Peacebuilding Commission is supposed to play an advocacy and catalytic role in galvanizing the international community to pay sustained attention to these countries in the medium to long term, until national authorities have developed the capacity to carry out peacebuilding processes on their own long after the external helpers have left.

The various configurations of the meetings of the Peacebuilding Commission provide a rare opportunity for United Nations bodies to interface with the Bretton Woods institutions and other donors, with a view to preventing duplication of peacebuilding efforts. The Commission further provides a forum for the participation of civil society groups or non-governmental organizations, through whose grass-roots activism the prospects for the success of peacebuilding initiatives at the local or community level are enhanced.

The first annual report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/62/137) highlights some of the achievements of the Commission in its first year of existence. Notwithstanding formidable difficulties encountered, members succeeded in putting in place the structures necessary for that novel institution to take off, albeit imperfectly. Given its relatively short

lifespan, the Peacebuilding Commission remains, in many respects, a work in progress. As highlighted in the first annual report of the Commission, there remain many challenges ahead. One year after it was created, a clear consensus on aspects of the Commission's mandate, operational methods and relationship with other United Nations bodies and non-United Nations entities has yet to emerge.

The Peacebuilding Commission must be adequately resourced to strengthen its capacity to accept more countries on its agenda. That will also require further improvements in its working methods, taking into account lessons learned in its first year of operation. Thus, those who qualify to be on the Commission's agenda should be determined not by numbers, geography or region, but by necessity, relevance and reality.

Credible reports received from the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in Guinea-Bissau, the Economic and Social Council, the Economic Community of West African States and the International Contact Group on Guinea-Bissau, among other sources, confirm that the situation in Guinea-Bissau remains fragile. Ghana therefore supports Guinea-Bissau's pending request to the Security Council to be referred to the Peacebuilding Commission. We look forward to working together with other members of the Security Council to achieve the necessary consensus on Guinea-Bissau's request.

The Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund, as well as all relevant actors, must make greater efforts to mobilize the support of regional organizations. In the case of Africa, the African Union Policy Framework on Post-conflict Reconstruction and Development, which places emphasis on preventive diplomacy through addressing the root causes of conflict — such as poverty, injustice and inequality and the absence of the rule of law and good governance — should be regarded as an important instrument for cooperation among the Peacebuilding Commission, the Peacebuilding Fund and African countries to devise post-conflict peacebuilding strategies. Further clarification is desirable as to what the relationship should be between the Commission and the Fund and between them and other United Nations bodies, such as the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.

In conclusion, it is the hope and the expectation of my delegation that the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund will succeed in mobilizing more resources — financial, technical and otherwise — as well as in attracting the political will necessary to facilitate their work to add value to peacebuilding efforts in countries in post-conflict situations, including Burundi and Sierra Leone.

Mr. Steeghs (Netherlands): The Netherlands aligns itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Portugal.

The Peacebuilding Commission was the missing piece in the United Nations jigsaw puzzle. It was intended to bridge the gap between immediate post-conflict efforts and long-term recovery and development. Bridging that gap is crucial to improving the lot of the poorest on the planet — the bottom billion, as Paul Collier calls them in his recent book by the same title. Nearly three quarters of the people in the bottom billion have recently been through — or are still in the midst of — civil war. And half of all civil wars result from post-conflict relapse.

Breaking the cycle of conflict so that the bottom billion can break free from the prison of poverty is what the Peacebuilding Commission can contribute to. That is a lot to live up to, but over the past year the Peacebuilding Commission has clearly been building momentum by building strategies and identifying priorities for Burundi and Sierra Leone. The reports before us today during this useful and valuable General Assembly debate (A/62/137 and A/62/138) lead us to that conclusion.

As a staunch supporter of both international order and international development, the Netherlands is proud to have played its role in getting this centrepiece of United Nations reform off the ground, and we are proud to continue to support it. As we speak, my Ambassador, Frank Majoor, Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission's Sierra Leone configuration, is on his second mission to that country. After the peaceful, orderly and genuinely contested elections there, he seeks to expand the partnership between Sierra Leone and the international community, in particular the Peacebuilding Commission.

Mutual accountability must be at the heart of that partnership — in fact, of any partnership that the Peacebuilding Commission fosters. That is why we believe it is so important that, in the short term, a

monitoring and evaluation framework be integrated into the integrated peacebuilding strategy for Burundi and, in the long term, into the strategy for Sierra Leone. I am referring to monitoring not in terms of time-consuming number crunching, but in general terms, with a focus on potential peacebuilding gaps.

At this point in time, we can safely state that the Peacebuilding Commission has gotten off the ground. Ultimately, the Commission will have to be judged according to results in countries in the field, not in New York. For such results to materialize, the Commission must work to realize its potential as a catalyst for in-country coordination. With the successful country-specific meetings, we have already been laying the groundwork for just that. The Commission should not be an extra layer; it should not add to the burden of bureaucracy facing already-strained States. Rather, it should add value by standing at the operational and analytical centre of collective efforts to build peace — real peace, which is more than the absence of war.

For that, we also need the enhanced support of the Peacebuilding Support Office. And clearly, the Commission cannot do without the support of all the other international and national actors involved. Together we can build that bridge — the bridge between immediate post-conflict efforts and long-term recovery and development. This enterprise will now enter its second year, and we agree with the Commission's priorities for the forthcoming 12 months, especially the following ones: devising exit strategies, coming up with modalities for civil society involvement and working out the details of a monitoring mechanism for the integrated peacebuilding strategies. Beyond that, we feel that the Commission should also give more attention to quick wins, which are crucial to winning the peace.

I started by saying that the Peacebuilding Commission was the missing piece of a jigsaw puzzle. After only one year, it would be unrealistic to think that the new piece would in all respects fit entirely. And it does not fit entirely. There is still ample room for improvement. But there is that good feeling — a gut feeling, I might say — that in the near future everything might just fall right into place if only we work hard enough. And the Netherlands will.

Mr. Ntakirutimana (Burundi) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I wish on behalf of my delegation to thank the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-second session for having convened this important meeting on the report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/62/137) and of the report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/62/138). My delegation would also like to commend the work of the Organizational Committee under the chairmanship of Angola and the vice-chairmanship of El Salvador, and warmly to welcome Japan as the new Chair of the Committee.

In addition, my delegation offers deserved thanks to His Excellency Mr. Johan Løvald, Permanent Representative of Norway, for the leadership that he repeatedly demonstrated both during the country-specific meetings on Burundi and during meetings of the Peacebuilding Commission. I also wish to sincerely thank Ms. Carolyn McAskie and her team for their considerable support to the work of the Peacebuilding Commission.

My delegation fully endorses the statement made by the representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), but would like to make several additional comments.

Since the establishment of democratically elected institutions, Burundi has made considerable progress in terms of peacebuilding, in particular with the signing in September 2006 of a comprehensive ceasefire agreement with the last rebel movement, the PALIPEHUTU-Forces nationales de libération (FNL). In that regard, my delegation duly appreciates the efforts of the South African facilitation and welcomes the regional peace initiative as well as the support provided to my country by the United Nations, the African Union and the international community in general.

In selecting Burundi as the first country to benefit from the Peacebuilding Fund, the members of the Commission demonstrated their commitment to Burundi in its search for strategies and methods to enable it to build sustainable peace and to revive a national economy that can generate sustainable and beneficial development.

The Government of Burundi appreciates the efforts undertaken by the Commission and welcomes its first report. First and foremost, it raised the international community's awareness of the urgent need for community recovery in Burundi by participating in the development partners round table

that took place on 24 and 25 May. We are particularly pleased that the round table was successful. My delegation counts on the Commission to ensure that partners and donors meet their commitments.

Secondly, the Commission held several country-specific meetings on Burundi here in New York, which provided an opportunity to think about the concept of good political and administrative governance in Burundi. Similar work was done to identify the key priorities for peacebuilding and for reducing the risk of a relapse into conflict and, of direct interest to us, to define and adopt the strategic peacebuilding framework.

Today the Burundi Government, working with all stakeholders nationally and with the support of the Commission, is exploring the establishment of a follow-up mechanism. Work is moving ahead properly in that area.

As the two reports before us today demonstrate, 2006 saw the inception and operational launching of the Commission and of the Peacebuilding Support Office, under the committed leadership of Ms. Carolyn McAskie. This preliminary work was essential for its first year of experience in the process of peacebuilding in post-conflict countries. While welcoming the work already done, we must underscore that much remains to be done, in particular with respect to the implementation of the strategic framework and the follow-up mechanism.

My delegation continues to believe that the Peacebuilding Commission will carry out its mission successfully as it supports my country in its efforts to build lasting peace. With the Commission, a glimmer of hope has been born in the hearts of Burundians. And with the Commission, calm and assurance will be the hallmark of the implementation of our programmes.

As a member of the Peacebuilding Commission and as a beneficiary country, my delegation would like to make a few comments about the future activities of the Peacebuilding Commission. First, the principle of national ownership must always be the cornerstone of the Commission's activities. Secondly, the Commission should differentiate itself from other United Nations subsidiary bodies by adopting innovative measures with regard to transparency, compromise, consensus-building and flexibility. Thirdly, the Commission should continue to work closely with the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the international financial institutions.

I wish to conclude my statement by reiterating once again Burundi's commitment to success and thus to becoming a source of pride for the Peacebuilding Commission and for the United Nations.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the observer of the Observer State of the Holy See.

Archbishop Migliore (Holy See): At the very outset, my delegation wishes to express appreciation to Ambassador Ismael Gaspar Martins, Permanent Representative of Angola, for his able chairmanship during the inaugural year of the Peacebuilding Commission. I wish also to express best wishes to Ambassador Yukio Takasu, Permanent Representative of Japan, as he assumes the chairmanship of the Commission.

My delegation believes that the best guarantee against conflict is the individual and collective enjoyment of durable peace. To achieve that in a post-conflict country, it is necessary to recognize the special needs of that country so that it can be assisted accordingly in laying the foundations of sustainable peace.

The Holy See therefore warmly welcomed the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission as a response to the need for greater coherence and coordination of international peacebuilding efforts in post-conflict situations. The Commission's success will be measured on the ground, based on whether or not it makes a difference to communities and countries with which it works. Expectations of what it can deliver in countries emerging from armed conflicts continue to climb. This is especially true in Burundi and Sierra Leone. There, the Peacebuilding Commission is entering uncharted areas of action, but the Commission's emphasis on strong national ownership and responsibility gives us reason to hope for success in those first two focus countries, as well as in other post-conflict States that will be considered in the future.

The Peacebuilding Commission debates and documents suggest that one of the main challenges facing it is to prove that it is not a superfluous superstructure cast over the various stakeholders and actors already working on the ground. Rather, it is

meant to bring added value to the overall effort of helping post-conflict States and societies successfully manage the difficult transition from war to sustainable peace and development. The task is made even more daunting by the fact that post-conflict situations pose multiple and particularly complex problems, all competing for immediate attention. To enable the Peacebuilding Commission to respond adequately to this, the international community is equally challenged to equip it with the necessary mandate and resources.

I wish to commend the Working Group on Lessons Learned for its efforts in accumulating best practices and lessons on critical peacebuilding issues, thus helping the Peacebuilding Commission make decisions more swiftly while avoiding the repetition of past mistakes.

The Holy See was pleased with the approval of guidelines for civil society participation in the Peacebuilding Commission. Such participation would be decisive on the ground where, among other stakeholders, faith-based organizations are fully engaged in human development and are at the forefront in fostering dialogue, in peacemaking and in post-conflict reconciliation.

My delegation is aware of the continuing debates on what the Peacebuilding Commission should be, on its relation to peacekeeping operations and on its procedures and methods. While this is part of the Commission's growth process, these debates should not distract or derail it from its mandate of making a difference in the lives of peoples and countries, lest it become just another forum for debate.

My delegation is pleased to assure the Assembly of its continuing interest in the work of the Peacebuilding Commission and to encourage the Commission in the pursuit of its challenging task of helping rebuild individual lives and entire countries ravaged by war. It will have fully achieved this task when development, peace and security and human rights are finally interlinked and mutually reinforcing in countries which have known the devastation of armed conflict.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with resolution 57/32 of 19 November 2002, I now give the floor to the observer of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Mr. Motter (Inter-Parliamentary Union): I am pleased to have been given this opportunity to address the General Assembly on agenda item 10 as it relates to the first annual report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/62/137). As we all know, peace will never be fully achieved without good governance, and parliaments, which are among the institutions at the heart of governance, play a key role in the peacebuilding process.

During the Peacebuilding Commission's first year of operations, the country-specific meetings on Burundi identified a number of critical priorities for peace consolidation and for reducing the country's risk of relapsing into conflict. We are pleased to see that action to improve governance and democracy was at the core of those priorities. The Peacebuilding Commission report recommends, among other things, promoting the capacity of the parliament to enact and revise national legislation and to ensure its compliance with international human rights standards.

We have striven to support the efforts of the Peacebuilding Commission in Burundi and in Sierra Leone. In Burundi, we have worked with the parliament to build its lawmaking and oversight capacities. With United Nations Democracy Fund support, we have begun implementing activities aimed at enhancing the capacities of women parliamentarians, including initiatives aimed at bringing women parliamentarians from all political parties together to work for the promotion of women's rights.

Above all, we have engaged the leadership of the parliament in an initiative to promote dialogue in a bid to ensure that decision-making is as inclusive as possible. Indeed, we cannot overemphasize the importance of parliament as the crucible of national reconciliation in its role of mediating between the divergent interests of society, especially against the immediate post-conflict background of Burundi.

What I have just said regarding Burundi holds true for Sierra Leone. We are anxious to ensure that its parliament figures high on the peacebuilding agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission and the international community at large. We owe it to the people of Sierra Leone to ensure that the fragile peace process does not come unravelled. We should ensure that the representatives of the people rise above parochial interests in favour of the general interest. The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), as the world

organization of national parliaments, stands ready to continue to support efforts to develop parliaments that are representative, transparent, accessible, accountable and effective.

In the light of that, the IPU is sending a mission to Sierra Leone to review the functioning of its parliament and assist parliamentary authorities in identifying specific needs with a view to developing a comprehensive project of assistance to strengthen the capacity of the parliament to perform its lawmaking, oversight and representational roles more efficiently. We are doing this, I am pleased to add, in cooperation with the United Nations.

It is our fervent hope that the Peacebuilding Commission will extend its hand to other post-conflict countries. In that regard, we are pleased with the recent decision to include Liberia among countries eligible for support under the Peacebuilding Fund.

During the Peacebuilding Commission's first year of work, the Commission has covered many areas aimed at bringing more coherence to peacebuilding efforts where democratically elected parliaments have been placed high among the priorities of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with resolution 3369 (XXX) of 10 October 1975, I now give the floor to the observer of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Mr. Wahab (Organization of the Islamic Conference): My delegation would like to express sincere appreciation for the excellent beginning that has been made by the Peacebuilding Commission under the leadership of Ambassador Gaspar Martins and his team. We welcome Ambassador Takasu as the new Chairman of the Commission and assure him and his team of our full support and cooperation. We also congratulate the Peacebuilding Support Office, headed by Assistant Secretary-General McAskie, for its excellent work doing the first year of the Commission's work.

We welcome the report of the Peacebuilding Commission, contained in document A/62/137. Indeed, it gives my delegation great pleasure to see this first-ever annual report, which is objective, informative and coherent in its content and timely in its need. My delegation concurs with the report's assertion that the main challenge now facing the Commission is to maximize its impact on the ground to make the United Nations peacebuilding architecture an effective instrument of international collaboration in support of countries emerging from conflict.

We also welcome the Secretary-General's report on the Peacebuilding Fund, contained in document A/62/138. While it appears that contributions to the Fund are gradually flowing in, we feel that greater effort needs to be exerted in order for Fund initiatives to realize their maximum desired effect.

The OIC continues to remain engaged in major initiatives directed at Sierra Leone. The latest meeting of the OIC Contact Group on Sierra Leone was held two weeks ago here at the United Nations. The resulting deliberations and decisions taken ensure that the OIC will remain committed to all pertinent initiatives targeting that country.

In terms of broader engagement with the Peacebuilding Commission, the determination of the OIC to remain committed to its endeavours is reflected in the final communiqué of the annual coordination meeting of the ministers of foreign affairs of the States members of the OIC, which was held here in New York on 2 October 2007.

The ministers of the OIC countries unequivocally appreciated the Peacebuilding Commission's important contributions during its first year, as well as the active and constructive participation of the OIC member States that are members of the Commission. They welcomed the invitation to the OIC to participate in the Commission's meetings and supported its continued engagement in that regard. Finally, they requested OIC member States to consider providing financial contributions to the OIC Secretary-General such that they may be transferred as the OIC's contribution to the Peacebuilding Fund.

Lastly, we wish the Peacebuilding Commission the very best as it continues in its endeavour to achieve its noble objectives.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate. The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda items 10 and 110.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.

United Nations A/62/PV.25

General Assembly

Official Records

Sixty-second session

25th plenary meeting
Monday, 15 October 2007, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kerim ..... (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Ilkin (Turkey), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 132 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/62/478)

The Acting President: If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, may I take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the report of the Fifth Committee that is before the Assembly today?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote.

The positions of delegations regarding the recommendation of the Fifth Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records.

May I remind members that under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that,

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, i.e., either in the Committee or in plenary meeting, unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

May I remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendation contained in the report of the Fifth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take a decision in the same manner as was done in the Fifth Committee.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution, recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. The Committee adopted the draft resolution, entitled "Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations: requests under Article 19 of the Charter", without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 62/1).

The Acting President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 132.

Agenda items 74 and 75

Report of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

07-54249 (E)

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the twelfth annual report of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (A/62/284)

Report of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the fourteenth annual report of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (A/62/172)

The Acting President: May I take it that the Assembly takes note of the twelfth annual report of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: May I take it that the Assembly takes note of the fourteenth annual report of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: I now call on Mr. Dennis Byron, President of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.

Mr. Byron: I am greatly honoured to address the members of the General Assembly. Today, as President of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), I am presenting the twelfth annual report of the Tribunal of its activities from 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007 (see A/62/284).

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my most sincere congratulations to President Kerim on his election as President of the General Assembly.

The report demonstrates that the Tribunal's Trial Chambers continued to vigorously work at full capacity. They rendered judgements involving five accused and more than 250 interlocutory and pretrial decisions. Trials involving five other accused have been completed and await judgement. In addition, trials involving 22 accused are in progress. According to our projections, judgements concerning five of them will be delivered early next year. As of today, the cases of the six remaining detainees are at the pretrial stage. They will be ready to commence in early 2008, as soon as Trial Chamber and courtroom capacity permits.

The Appeals Chamber heard and disposed of an increased number of cases between July 2006 and June 2007. Judgements on appeal were delivered concerning six individuals, bringing the total number of persons whose appeals are completed to 19. During the reporting period, over 100 interlocutory decisions and pretrial orders and decisions were delivered. Four accused have pending appeals. As a result of the 10 anticipated judgements to be delivered by early next year, the workload of the Appeals Chamber will progressively and substantially increase.

The efforts of the Prosecutor, Mr. Hassan Jallow, continued to be focused on securing the arrest of the accused still at large, notably Félicien Kabuga. The three organs of the Tribunal have been constantly sensitizing the international community on the importance of this issue. The Prosecutor, in particular, has conducted diplomatic missions to several States and has deployed investigators to track the fugitives. Following a report submitted by the three principals of the Tribunal, INTERPOL's 19th African Regional Conference passed, in July 2007, a resolution calling on all National Central Bureaus to provide assistance in arresting the remaining fugitives. By October 2007, three of them had been arrested in coordination with INTERPOL. On behalf of the Tribunal, I would like to thank INTERPOL and the national law enforcement agencies of the countries in which the fugitives were arrested for their efforts.

During the reporting period, the Registry, headed by Mr. Adama Dieng, continued to play a crucial role in the work of the Tribunal by providing administrative and judicial support to all its trials. The continuous diplomatic efforts of the Office of the Registrar led to successful cooperation and assistance of Members States with the Tribunal, including the relocation of acquitted persons. Moreover, the Registry worked successfully to enhance the public image of and interest in the work of the Tribunal by carrying out a diverse range of public relations activities in Rwanda. The Outreach Programme also greatly contributed to capacity-building in Rwanda by organizing visits to the seat of the Tribunal and training sessions and by producing documentaries and other publications.

I assure the Assembly that all sections of the Tribunal are coordinating their efforts to achieve its mandate and to complete its work at the earliest date possible.

In addition, the Tribunal continues to coordinate its efforts with those of the International Criminal

Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs in addressing the residual mechanisms that are needed to achieve its work and promote its legacy.

However, the continued assistance and cooperation of Member States is paramount for the successful accomplishment of our vital mission. It is critical for securing the arrest of the 15 accused still at large. The nations represented here today must recognize the risks posed to achieving international justice if they remain fugitives. It is clear that the Tribunal's mandate, as defined by the Security Council, may require that some of the remaining fugitives be considered as candidates for trial at the Tribunal itself. The date of their arrest and transfer to the Tribunal may impact on the ability of the Tribunal to effect a timely completion of all trials at first instance. The referral of cases, the serving of sentences for convicted persons, the relocation of acquitted persons and convicted persons who have served their sentences are all issues that require the assistance of Member States and need to be urgently addressed as the Tribunal moves forward. Currently there are six pending referral cases before the Tribunal.

Strengthening the Rwandan judicial capacity is a key component of the Tribunal's mandate to bring about justice, stability and reconciliation in the region. As fully described in the annual report, the Tribunal provides support in Rwanda to the judicial sector, civil society and academic institutions through its capacity-building and the Outreach Programme.

These and many other activities were made possible by the gracious financial assistance of the European Commission and the Tribunal's Voluntary Trust Fund, established in response to resolution 49/251 of 20 July 1995 to support essential work programmes that are not adequately funded by the assessed budget. I invite Member States to replenish the Fund and sustain these projects, which defend the Tribunal's legacy and meet the completion milestones set out by the Security Council.

The successful completion of trials will be realized thanks to the highly dedicated work of Tribunal staff. However, I should emphasize the fact that the Registry continues to be faced with challenges related to the retention of staff. Staff departures are on the rise. Unless something is done to slow this trend, there is the likelihood that this could negatively impact on the completion strategy. The vacancy rate is continuously increasing. By the end of September 2007, it had reached 20 percent for professional staff and above, as staff members continue to leave the Tribunal for more stable jobs. This situation is aggravated by the difficulties in recruiting new staff as the Tribunal moves closer to completion. The Tribunal calls upon Member States to come up with a mechanism that addresses their concern in order to ensure that adequate resources are made available to the Tribunal for the successful and timely completion of its work.

The twelfth annual report shows that a high level of performance has been achieved and that the workload of the Tribunal is under control. It also demonstrates the Tribunal's unwavering commitment to its mandate to bring about justice and reconciliation in Rwanda and in the region, while upholding due process.

At this juncture, I would like to pay special tribute to all judges of the Tribunal, with special emphasis on the ad litem judges, who have continued to contribute greatly to the Tribunal's achievements.

Since the beginning of its trial proceedings, in January 1997, the Tribunal has arrested 75 individuals out of the 90 indicted persons, including the former Prime Minister, Jean Kambanda, and 14 other members of his interim Government of Rwanda, as well as many senior political and military leaders, journalists, intellectuals, religious and youth leaders and businessmen. Judgements against 33 of those individuals have been delivered in first instance: 28 were sentenced to prison terms ranging from five years to life, while 5 persons were acquitted. During the next 15 months, the Tribunal will be moving to the rapid completion of the trials of the remaining 42 persons who have already been arrested and to the arrest and trial of some or all of the 15 fugitives. But I am sure that all members will agree with me that 15 months constitutes a daunting challenge.

I must recall that, in the founding resolution of the ICTR (Security Council resolution 955 (1994)), the Security Council explained that the motive for setting up the Tribunal was to bring peace to the Great Lakes region and to deter the concept of impunity for mass atrocity. It is significant that for those political purposes, a judicial institution was established. At first glance, the Tribunal might be judged as a success or a

failure by certain political criteria. But there are legal criteria by which it must be judged as a court. It will be held to have succeeded or failed by the credibility and fairness of its trial process. More important, I submit that the explicit political purpose in its creation may best be served by its success as a court and by the fairness of its process.

While the Tribunal has introduced measures to speed up trials, it is critically important to ensure that essential fair-trial rights are not prejudiced, so that no reasonable onlooker will be able to regard the process or the end result as unfair. Nonetheless, the political impact of the Tribunal's work has already extended beyond the number of persons prosecuted and judgements rendered. Through the trial proceedings and judgements, it has established an essential record of the grave violations of international humanitarian law committed in Rwanda in 1994. It has built an impressive and unprecedented body of jurisprudence of both substantive international criminal law and procedure. Its leading decisions and judgements are already providing essential guidance for national and international courts designed to enforce international humanitarian law, such as the Special Court for Sierra Leone or the International Criminal Court. It has influenced and will continue to influence legal and constitutional reforms in Rwanda and the Great Lakes region.

One of the fundamental and lasting contributions of the Tribunal is the bringing of justice to the peoples of Rwanda and the Great Lakes region. Justice is an essential element of peace and reconciliation. There will be no lasting peace if there is no credible international justice perspective that unites, on a higher level, the peoples of Rwanda and the Great Lakes region, who have suffered from the heinous crimes committed in 1994. That is still as true today as it was 12 years ago, when the late Judge Laity Kama presented the first annual report of the Tribunal to this body, in which he stressed, "If justice is not done, there may be no end to hatred" (*A/51/PV.78, p. 5*).

I want to take this opportunity to thank the members of the General Assembly for their dedicated support for the Tribunal over the years. That support has been instrumental in furthering the common practice worldwide of fighting against the impunity of those responsible for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.

I stand before the Assembly to reiterate our unwavering commitment to the mandate given to the Tribunal, to the implementation of its completion strategy and to bringing to justice those persons who were most responsible for the genocide and the violations of international humanitarian law in Rwanda in 1994. Our work will not be completed until we establish the guilt or innocence of the accused, bring justice to victims of the massive crimes that were committed and establish a record of facts that can aid reconciliation in Rwanda. I respectfully request the continued assistance of all Member States as we pursue our commitment to completing the trials and to guaranteeing the triumph of international justice and the fight against impunity.

The Acting President: I now call on Judge Fausto Pocar, President of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.

Mr. Pocar: I am honoured to appear before members today for the second time as President of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, to present to the General Assembly the fourteenth annual report of the Tribunal (see A/62/172).

Before I begin my address, I would like to congratulate President Kerim on his recent election as President of the General Assembly. Let me also express my deep gratitude to the members of the Assembly for the crucial support that they have given the Tribunal since its inception. I wish to acknowledge that without that support, the International Tribunal would not represent, as it does today, a beacon in the development and enforcement of international justice and a mechanism for advancing the rule of law in the region of the former Yugoslavia.

In my address today, I would like to consider for a moment the impact of the work of the Tribunal on what was, at the time of its establishment, an as yet untested belief in the idea that international criminal law was not only enforceable but capable of contributing to the restoration of international peace and security. When, in the wake of reports of untold atrocities arising from the conflict in the former Yugoslavia, the Security Council determined in its wisdom to create an international criminal tribunal, it did so without precedent and with little real assurance of whether such an international tribunal could succeed.

The Tribunal has not only demonstrated that international criminal law is, in fact, an enforceable body of law, but has also acted as a catalyst for the proliferation of other ad hoc international or mixed tribunals administering international criminal justice, in relation to Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Cambodia, East Timor, Lebanon and, of course, for the establishment of the permanent International Criminal Court. The influence of the Tribunal's achievements on the decision to establish these other bodies and the importance of its substantive and procedural jurisprudence to the success of these institutions has been profound. At the more practical level, the International Tribunal has also supported these institutions through loans and transfers of our experienced staff and through training workshops. The message proclaimed by the Tribunal and now by all of the successor institutions is clear — there will be no impunity where there is international will.

In reporting on the progress of the Tribunal, I must draw the attention of the Assembly to the fact that the International Tribunal is also an example in terms of efficiency. By way of illustration, the most current figures show that the Tribunal has indicted a total of 161 accused persons, with trial and appeal proceedings completed to date against 109 of those persons, if one also considers the appeal judgment to be delivered tomorrow in the Halilović case. Currently, proceedings in seven cases concerning eight persons are pending on appeal. Additionally, appeals in a case concerning three persons are expected. Further, 25 accused in seven cases are in trial proceedings. Only 12 accused are awaiting trial and, unfortunately, four fugitives remain at large. In fact, taking into account that most cases are heard at both first instance and on appeal, the International Tribunal has issued more than three times the number of judicial decisions than all the other international criminal courts and tribunals taken together. In other words, the efficiency of the Tribunal remains unparalleled today.

Currently, the International Tribunal is operating at unprecedented speed, with seven trials running simultaneously in its three courtrooms. To conduct these trials, a number of Tribunal's ad litem judges sit on two cases simultaneously, either as full judges or as reserve judges. Accordingly, many judges sit from early in the morning into the evening. In addition, several of the permanent judges are preparing for new trials while finishing judgement in another case and, where possible, starting new trials while working on an outstanding judgement. All of the International Tribunal's trial judges, permanent and ad litem, are working at maximum capacity.

Likewise, the appeals judges have had an exceptionally productive year, rendering a record 11 judgments, both in International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) cases, including seven judgments in the last six months. That is in addition to hundreds of interlocutory decisions, over decisions on review and reconsideration, and two contempt decisions issued.

As President of the International Tribunal, I have been heartened by the commitment and dedication shown by all of the judges of the Tribunal to meeting the objectives of the completion strategy without sacrificing due process and to retaining the crucial support of the international community. I am confident that the General Assembly will share my appreciation.

In addition to the judgements it issues, the Tribunal has remained focused on ensuring that the countries on whose soil the conflicts were fought are benefiting as much as possible from its work. Indeed, through its ability to refer the cases of mid- to low-level accused to the courts of the region, pursuant to rule 11 bis of its rules of procedure and evidence, the International Tribunal is helping to establish those courts as the national leaders in the domestic prosecution of war crimes cases.

As part of their commitment to ensuring that the courts of the region have the capacity to prosecute war crimes cases in accordance with international standards, the judges of the International Tribunal have welcomed members of courts of the region to the International Tribunal on several occasions to participate in round table discussions and workshops and have also travelled to the region themselves to participate in local conferences, where they have been able to share their experiences and exchange expertise on a range of subjects.

Such meetings have led to a growing partnership between judges of the International Tribunal and judges of the domestic courts and in that spirit the International Tribunal recently amended its rules of procedure and evidence to allow local judicial authorities to directly petition the Tribunal's judges for access to protected information held by the Tribunal

and relevant to local proceedings. The importance of opening up the materials of the International Tribunal to those courts is critical to preserving the legacy of the Tribunal through their continued prosecution of war crimes cases.

In addition, the Prosecutor has developed parallel cooperative relationships with prosecutors of the region through training sessions, conferences and seminars aimed at furthering the rule of law. The Office of the Prosecutor has also been instrumental in providing relevant materials to the authorities in the region and in granting direct access to its electronic databases, where appropriate, to facilitate the prosecution by local prosecutors of alleged war criminals not indicted by the International Tribunal.

While the judges and the Prosecutor have worked with the relevant judicial and prosecutorial authorities, the Registry has, through the Tribunal's outreach programme, also continued its outreach efforts towards local populations to disseminate awareness of the work of the Tribunal and provide information and access to its judgements and decisions. This work has been instrumental in gaining the support of people from the region for the work of the Tribunal and in furthering domestic prosecution of war crimes cases.

As the International Tribunal comes closer to completing its mandate, the importance of ensuring local judicial capacity becomes all the more pressing. It is these local courts that will carry on what I consider to be the real legacy of the International Tribunal — our contribution to ending impunity. In that respect, the international community must ensure that local courts can avail themselves of the resources necessary to ensure the integrity of the prosecutions of persons accused of serious violations of international humanitarian law. In particular, I note the need for additional training of prison staff and for ensuring the provision of conditions of detention that conform to international human rights standards.

As the completion strategy's final dates loom, the International Tribunal has also focused its attention on other issues of importance to its legacy. In conjunction with the ICTR, the Tribunal has identified the 12 residual issues that will remain following the completion of cases currently pending on its docket. Those issues concern important matters such as outstanding fugitives, witness protection, enforcement and commutation of sentences, requests for review of judgements and archives.

Currently, the Tribunal is working with the Security Council Working Group on the ad hoc international tribunals to ensure that residual mechanisms are in place to deal with all of these matters and to guarantee the continued integrity of the Tribunal's work. In that respect, a final paper on legacy issues was submitted in September of this year. The Tribunal will continue its work with the Working Group in the coming months.

The timely completion of the mandate of the Tribunal has always been tied to the issue of cooperation of the States in the region, including in respect of the arrest of outstanding fugitives. During the reporting period, two of the International Tribunal's six long-standing fugitives were arrested and transferred to The Hague: Zdravko Tolimir from Bosnia and Herzegovina in May 2007, and Vlastimir Dordevič from Montenegro on 17 June 2007. Those arrests were made with the cooperation of Governments in the region: Serbia and the Republika Srpska, an entity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, assisted in the apprehension of Tolimir and Serbia and Montenegro assisted with the arrest of Vlastimir Dordevič.

While the International Tribunal is appreciative of the cooperation of those States in the arrests of those two fugitives, it remains frustrated with the continued failure of the international community to arrest the remaining fugitives. We do not believe that nobody knows where these fugitives are and consider the continued failure to effect their arrests, particularly those of Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić, to be an affront to justice and the rule of law over impunity. Indeed, that failure stands in contradiction to the very principles that were proclaimed by the international community and upon which the establishment of the Tribunal was based. Accordingly, I again urge all States to abide by their international obligations to effect the arrest of all of these fugitives immediately. Without their arrest and trial, the mission of the International Tribunal will not be completed.

Another issue that involves State cooperation is the relocation of witnesses and the enforcement of the International Tribunal's sentences. During the reporting period, the Registry managed to secure two additional agreements on the relocation of sensitive witnesses and

two enforcement-of-sentence agreements, with Belgium and the Ukraine, the latter being the first East European State to enter into such an agreement. While this represents progress, the Tribunal calls on all States which have not yet entered into any such agreements to do so in order that the burden of international justice can be better shared.

I would now like to turn to another issue of pressing concern to me as President of the International Tribunal, that is, the retention of the International Tribunal's qualified and talented staff and of the International Tribunal's judges. The International Tribunal's efficiency results directly from the commitment and dedication of the individuals who carry out its activities. The judges and staff employed by the International Tribunal are motivated by the ideal of serving the cause of international justice and by their desire to bring justice to the victims of the conflict. However, working at the Tribunal is not without its pressures, related to the need to speed up our work to meet completion strategy dates, the constant assessments and reassessments of our methodologies to maintain and increase current efficiency levels, the question of the continuing support of the international community and of course, pressures about the future.

We all know that the Tribunal will complete its work in the near future and that those who have dedicated many years of service to it will have to seek new career opportunities. Member States have assisted us with improving conditions and further training opportunities for our staff and we look forward to their continued support for further measures as we approach the downsizing phase of the Tribunal. We will continue to work with the United Nations Secretariat to develop measures which may further increase the career prospects for our staff as we close. It is with concern that I note that, already, talented members of staff are leaving the Tribunal for more attractive employment in other institutions dedicated to the cause of international justice, including taking up offers from other United Nations bodies. I urge the General Assembly not to overlook the impact of staff departures on the timely completion of the International Tribunal's work. Member States' support for suitable staff retention policies is critical.

I must also express to the General Assembly my concern about the retention of the Tribunal's judges. Members of the Assembly are aware of the long-standing issue of the conditions and service of the International Tribunal's judges and, in particular, the discrimination suffered by ICTY judges in the assessment of their pension entitlements vis-à-vis the judges of the International Court of Justice. Unfortunately, a failure to resolve this issue in a favourable manner is likely to result in the departure of some of the Tribunal's most experienced judges, who will feel compelled to leave the Tribunal to secure pension entitlements in their national jurisdictions. This is not a situation that would sit comfortably with the timely and efficient completion of the Tribunal's work. I invite members of the Assembly to look closely at this issue and its likely broader implications before making a binding decision on these matters.

The noteworthy achievements of the International Tribunal thus far have been possible because of the unwavering support of members of the Assembly. With their assistance, the International Tribunal has demonstrated to the world that fighting impunity while upholding due process norms is possible.

However, I must reiterate that the Assembly's continued support will be more vital than ever in these last few years of the Tribunal's mandate. I call upon all Member States to assist us in meeting our commitment to seeing the work of the Tribunal successfully through to the end. This is not only necessary to ensure that the historic work of the Tribunal is complete; it is essential to the cause of international justice and as a means of addressing threats to international peace and security and of promoting human rights.

With each successful prosecution, the International Tribunal is shoring up the foundations of a still nascent international system of criminal justice comprising a growing number of international judicial institutions acting together in a coordinated partnership with domestic jurisdictions. The International Tribunal's pioneering role and its unprecedented body of practice and case law will be its most significant achievement and the continuation of its work by local prosecutions of war criminals in the region its real legacy.

The Acting President: I now have the honour of giving the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ivo Sanader, Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia.

Mr. Sanader (Croatia): It is a great privilege for me to participate in the deliberations at this session of the General Assembly dedicated to the International

Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). I listened with the utmost interest to the introduction by the President of the ICTY, Judge Fausto Pocar, of the Tribunal's annual report (A/62/172). We highly appreciate Judge Pocar's work. I am also pleased that the Tribunal appreciates its cooperation with Croatia.

I want to emphasize that the Republic of Croatia was one of the proponents of the establishment of the ICTY — not only as a country directly affected by the war, but also as a country committed to establishing an international institution devoted to the implementation of criminal adjudication for the purpose of international justice. Now, 14 years later, we note with satisfaction that a number of the goals of the Tribunal's mandate and mission have been achieved. Some of the major perpetrators have been prosecuted, peace has been restored and confidence is growing. However, there is still room for improvement. It is only through proper analysis of the work of the ICTY that we can draw precious lessons for the future. And it is with a view to the future that we have to be thorough and critical in evaluating its work.

The role of the ICTY, and the messages that it sends through its practice, are of extreme importance today, when humanity is being continuously challenged. By properly and justly prosecuting those responsible for war crimes and atrocities committed in the past in places such as Vukovar, Srebrenica and Rwanda, we also discourage those who are willing or aiming to do — or who are already doing — the same things today in places such as Darfur.

We strongly believe that one of the aims of reform of the United Nations system should be to enhance the indispensable role of United Nations institutions in the prevention of gross human rights violations and in the protection and promotion of humanitarian law and of the rule of law in general. Strict adherence to humanitarian law and the rule of law at the national and international levels is essential for a more peaceful and just world, for human security and for trustful cooperation among peoples and nations. The prosecution of war crimes and of the gravest breaches of humanitarian law must be fully ensured.

That brings into focus the role and the responsibilities of existing institutions, including the Hague Tribunal. In many cases, the Tribunal has been a vehicle for justice and for asserting the values of humanity. However, no institution should be immune from criticism. Proper analysis of the Tribunal's work does not challenge its independence; rather, it is the only way to learn from experience, for the benefit of international justice.

Ensuring a just outcome of prosecution is the only way to discourage those who might consider repeating such crimes, today or in the future. Just punishment offers a measure of respect for the victims. Just punishment is the best deterrent. Just punishment also serves truth and opens the way for lasting peace, security and reconciliation.

With that in mind, I have come here to express to the Assembly the dismay of the people of Croatia over the recent first-instance ruling in the Vukovar hospital case, concerning the massacre of patients at Ovcara farm. In my letter of 28 September 2007 (A/62/378, annex), I informed United Nations Member States accordingly.

Vukovar is a Danube River town located on the eastern border of Croatia. Like the inhabitants of any town in any other part of the world, its people wanted nothing more than to live peacefully and to work to build a prosperous future. But in 1991, during the aggression against Croatia, Vukovar was attacked with great force by the so-called Yugoslav People's Army (JNA). That attack had been planned in great detail, with lines of command clearly established by the military and political leadership of Milosevic's regime in Belgrade. During the attack, the JNA had both de jure and de facto command and control over all Serb forces, including territorial defence forces and paramilitary units. Tens of thousands of troops participated in the aggression and the siege directed against Vukovar.

Hundreds of tanks pounded the town for months, razing it to the ground. The 52 mass graves later discovered in the Vukovar area attest to the severity of the onslaught. Gunboats and combat aeroplanes were used indiscriminately by the JNA. Families were expelled from their homes by the thousands in what would later become known as a pattern of ethnic cleansing. The survivors of the Vukovar siege were displaced and sought refuge in 570 locations around the world.

Vukovar is the place where the worst war crimes in the territory of the Republic of Croatia were committed during the Serb aggression by Milosevic's

regime. On 20 November 1991, after Serb forces had occupied the city, 261 patients from the Vukovar hospital were taken to Ovcara farm, where they were tortured and killed in cold blood. Out of 200 exhumed crime victims, 190 have been identified; 61 victims are still missing. The documents on the bodies of the identified persons undoubtedly confirmed that they were the people who had been taken from the Vukovar hospital. Those documents have been delivered to the ICTY, and the Ovcara massacre was included by the prosecution in the indictment against Slobodan Milosevic in 2001.

The crime committed at Ovcara farm, because of its horrifying nature, its utter cruelty and the helplessness of its victims, occupies a special place among the crimes committed in the modern world. On 27 September 2007, 16 years later, the Trial Chamber of the ICTY issued a judgement concerning three former senior officers of the JNA. Mile Mrksic was sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment and Veselin Sljivancanin to 5 years' imprisonment, while Miroslav Radic was acquitted.

That judgement has caused consternation in Croatia and throughout the world. It defies the well-known and documented facts relevant to the establishment of responsibility. The Tribunal treated the Ovcara massacre as an isolated case, rather than as part of a systematic policy whose chain of command led to the JNA's military headquarters and to the then political leadership in Belgrade. Although all three indictees had been involved in numerous war crimes in Vukovar and Eastern Slavonia, the prosecution restricted its indictments to the best-known and most-documented Ovcara massacre. The prosecution might have expected that the horrible crimes committed in Ovcara would be sufficient for the maximum sentences to be imposed, but that did not happen.

Without a doubt, the mistreatment and killing of the patients from the Vukovar hospital were the result of premeditated unlawful actions by the occupying Power. Therefore, we have the right to ask why the Geneva Conventions, whose principles were incorporated into the Statute of the ICTY, were ignored in determining the guilt of these JNA officers? The Ovcara crime was not an isolated incident. War crimes do not begin at the scene of the crime; nor are they committed only as a result of circumstances existing in the battlefield. These crimes were preceded by policies that had created the conditions for future violence, with the goal of ethnically cleansing that Croatian territory and the expelling the non-Serb population.

That is supported by the fact that, ever since late August 1991, mass graves have appeared, not only in the territory of Eastern Slavonia, but also in other parts of Croatia that have experienced aggression, such as Banovina, Western Slavonia and Lika. So far, 143 mass graves have been discovered and their contents exhumed. Those mass graves contained, for the most part, the remains of ordinary citizens who remained in their homes following the occupation, as well as those of prisoners of war.

At the time of the Vukovar massacre the world was shocked. Sixteen years later a new shock followed. Croatia is deeply hurt by the injustice done to the Croatian people in Vukovar by demeaning this undeniable, inhumane and deliberate crime in the first-instance sentence. In this respect, Croatia is not alone: the sentence provoked many negative reactions from international human rights groups and prominent individuals, Government officials and parliamentarians, including the European Union-Croatia Joint Parliamentary Committee. The victims of this atrocity are sorely missed by their families and by the Croatian people. Let me be clear. I am bringing back the most painful memories of those days because I strongly believe they must serve as a reminder for the world today: never again!

This is where the responsibility of the ICTY is so evident, as nothing encourages crime more then impunity. And it is precisely for this reason that the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia was established in 1993.

Croatia expects that upon the Prosecutor's appeal, the ICTY Appeals Chamber will carefully re-examine this verdict and act in accordance with the clear mandate assigned to it by the Security Council. We ask for justice for all victims in Vukovar and elsewhere. This is of paramount importance for the future of international criminal justice.

It is of paramount importance because all crimes are individual. They must not be related to any nation. Fairness, truth and justice should help to close the pages of recent history in South-Eastern Europe. Croatia is ready to lead the way in this endeavour. We hope that today's post-Milosevic democratically oriented political forces and leadership in Serbia are choosing the same direction. That would further

strengthen regional confidence and cooperation and ensure lasting peace and stability in the region. One of the preconditions for this is the extradition of two of the most infamous indicted war criminals Karadžić and Mladić, as well as Hadžić, indicted for war crimes committed in Vukovar and Eastern Slavonia. In that way, justice would be fully served.

The indictment against Milosevic came too late after the horrible crimes committed in Croatia to serve as a deterrent for new crimes, not only in Croatia, but also in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Kosovo. His death made it impossible for his sentence to clearly outline the development of a political policy that used aggression and the systematic application of war crimes and which represents the framework within which all other individual crimes in the territory of the former Yugoslavia have been committed, regardless of their perpetrators.

Moreover, no indictments have ever been filed against Veljko Kadijevic and Blagoje Adzic, leaders of the JNA, who were instrumental in implementing such policies through military means, and at the very least through command responsibility — but also likely through participation in a joint criminal enterprise responsible for numerous war crimes.

Improvement is also possible in some other areas, and in this respect Croatia reaffirms its commitment, as a responsible and credible member of the international community, to continue to fully cooperate with the Tribunal and its readiness to offer help and assistance in order to enable the Tribunal to fulfil the tasks I have described.

The Croatian judiciary has shown its maturity in fairly and freely trying even the most sensitive cases. As a result, the ICTY demonstrated its trust in the Croatian judiciary by transferring the cases of the Croatian officers Ademi and Norac to the Croatian court. Within the framework of the ICTY's completion strategy, which we fully support, Croatia stands ready to take over all the remaining cases involving Croatian citizens.

The issue of punishment for war crimes relates to responsibility in a broader sense. It relates to the responsibility of the international community to ensure effectiveness in preventing conflict and protecting and promoting human rights, humanitarian law and the rule of law in general. It relates also to the present state of affairs in the world. Let us look around us. Evidence of inhumanity, violence and human suffering is only too visible.

My message from this rostrum is clear and forthright: everybody, everywhere, should have no doubt that any and all crimes against humanity will not be allowed to go unpunished. That is our common responsibility. Only then can we create a better world for posterity. Croatia considers the United Nations to be an indispensable instrument in our common struggle for such a future — a future that will bring hope to new generations and a more peaceful and just world.

The world must be a better place tomorrow. This is our responsibility today. Vukovar's victims deserve justice.

Mr. Tavares (Portugal): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The candidate country the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Montenegro, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Armenia align themselves with this declaration.

The European Union is strongly supportive of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). The Tribunals are making an invaluable contribution towards the attainment of our shared goal of ending impunity for those who perpetrate genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. They have played a key role in the development of international criminal law by building up an extensive jurisprudence, not least in relation to the crime of genocide. One such important contribution from the case law of the ICTR is the finding that acts of rape and sexual violence committed with intent to destroy a protected group as such can constitute genocide. And by bringing to justice the perpetrators of these most shocking crimes, the Tribunals have helped to strengthen the rule of law and promote long-term stability and reconciliation in the Balkans and in Rwanda.

The European Union welcomes the ongoing efforts by the ICTY and the ICTR to fulfil their completion strategies and continues to urge both Tribunals to build on the progress already made. At the same time, the EU urges States to fulfil their obligations under Security Council resolutions 1503 (2003) and 1534 (2004) in order to enable the

Tribunals to speedily complete their work. In particular, the EU calls on all those involved to redouble their efforts to expedite the arrest and surrender of the remaining fugitive indictees. In the context of the ICTY, the EU remains absolutely committed to seeing Ratko Mladić and Radovan Karadžić face international justice.

The European Union has adopted two Common Positions in order to support the effective implementation of the mandate of the ICTY by imposing an assets freeze on indicted fugitives and a travel ban on persons assisting ICTY indictees to evade justice. Cooperation with the Tribunal is also addressed in the context of the Stabilization and Association Process (SAP). Full cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) is a condition imposed on the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP) countries, namely Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania, for their moving forward in the process. Since 2003, the SAP countries have been asked to align themselves with the Common Positions. When the Tribunal ends its mandate, those countries will have the main responsibility for bringing justice to the victims of the conflicts. It is therefore important that the judiciary and the police of the countries of the region cooperate with a view to dismantling the support network of possible fugitives. Governments should not intervene in the work of domestic prosecution.

The European Union welcomes Serbia's recent efforts to improve cooperation with the ICTY. Nonetheless, the European Union continues to believe that full cooperation between Serbia and the Tribunal is a fundamental requirement for its conclusion of the SAP.

Let me also briefly address some issues related to the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). The European Union welcomes the achievements of the ICTR since we last discussed this issue a year ago. In his address to the Security Council on 18 June 2007, Judge Dennis Byron, President of the ICTR, recalled that the total number of cases completed in the first instance is now 27, involving 33 accused. The major challenge in terms of ongoing trials remains four multi-accused cases, involving 17 accused.

Concerning convicted persons, six of them are currently incarcerated in Mali, while the other convicted persons remain at the facility in Arusha. In addition, the Tribunal has concluded enforcement of sentence agreements with Benin, Swaziland, France, Italy and Sweden. The European Union strongly encourages States to conclude agreements on the relocation of witnesses and the enforcement of sentences with both Tribunals.

The strengthening of the Rwandan judicial system and the improvement of its capacity to prosecute cases transferred from the Tribunal is also a goal that the European Union fully supports. It is fully in line with Security Council resolution 1503 (2003). The Tribunal provides support to local judiciary and prosecutors in the region, as further described in the completion strategy.

The European Union also welcomes the Tribunal's outreach programme and its work through various initiatives, namely the ICTR Outreach Programme, awareness-raising programmes within Rwanda, efforts to strengthen relations with academic institutions in Rwanda and to develop media there, and the development of active cooperation with and assistance to Rwandan civil society organizations.

The ICTR faces two particular challenges — fugitive indictees and the proposed transfer of cases to Rwanda. There are currently 17 fugitive indictees, including Félicien Kabuga. The European Union urges all States to fulfil their obligations with respect to the arrest and surrender of outstanding indictees. With regard to the transfer of cases, the European Union welcomes Rwanda's efforts to strengthen its judicial system and build capacity to prosecute cases transferred by the ICTR. The final decision on transfer is, of course, a question for the ICTR judges.

To conclude, the Tribunals cannot succeed without the firm commitment of States to cooperate in accordance with their legal obligations. It is vital that this commitment be strengthened and sustained as the Tribunals approach the final stages of their work. This work will not be finished before Radovan Karadžić, Ratko Mladić and Félicien Kabuga are brought before the ICTY and the ICTR respectively. The European Union therefore reiterates its strong call to all Member States to live up to their international obligations by arresting and transferring the accused at large to The Hague and Arusha without delay. Continuing delays in

transfer also put in jeopardy the timely implementation of the completion strategies.

The international community must not send the message that perpetrators of the most serious international crimes of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity can go unpunished. Impunity is simply not an option.

Mr. McNee (Canada): I have the honour to speak on behalf of Australia, New Zealand and Canada (CANZ) today.

Allow me to begin by paying tribute to the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. Their work has contributed to ensuring greater accountability for those who commit war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. In so doing, they have developed a body of jurisprudence on multiple questions of international criminal law that is unprecedented. The two International Criminal Tribunals paved the way for other international criminal tribunals, including the International Criminal Court.

Both tribunals are scheduled to end their pending trials in the next two years. CANZ is encouraged by the attention being given by each Tribunal to its completion strategy, and we welcome the reappointments of the Prosecutors, Hassan Jallow and Carla Del Ponte, who will continue to lend their expertise and knowledge of the courts as they complete their work.

CANZ fully supports the implementation of the completion strategies of both Tribunals. We also welcome efforts to refer cases involving intermediate and lower-ranking accused to national jurisdictions, as part of the Tribunals' completion strategies. In this regard, we would note that all referred cases should be conducted in full compliance with the highest standards of due process. We encourage the international community to help strengthen national justice systems, where required, in support of the overall completion strategy. With respect to national justice systems, we especially welcome Rwanda's decision to formally abolish the death penalty. This important decision will further enhance the development of human rights.

In order for the Tribunals to complete their work, however, it is imperative that all remaining indictees be surrendered. We note with satisfaction that this past year has seen the arrest and transfer of Vlastimir Dordević and Zdravko Tolimir to the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). More must be done, however, including the immediate surrender of Radovan Karadžić, Ratko Mladić and Félicien Kabuga. States that continue to provide protection to these fugitives from international justice undermine not only our common fight against impunity, but also their own commitment to the rule of law.

(*spoke in French*)

As the Tribunals begin implementing their completion strategies, increasing attention will need to be paid to so-called legacy issues — the important, practical and sometimes complex actions that need to be taken on the judicial level and others, activities that will need to be carried out once the last indictee has been tried. In that regard, we note with appreciation the plans for a study on the future of the archives of the Tribunals. Canada, Australia and New Zealand encourage the Tribunals to make tackling those issues a priority and to work in close cooperation with other international criminal courts, such as the Special Court for Sierra Leone, in order to share ideas and experience.

Australia, New Zealand and Canada are strong supporters of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and will continue to lend them assistance as they lead the way towards enhanced accountability for international crimes. We call on all States to assist the Tribunals and to support their efforts to complete their work within the agreed time frames.

The Tribunals have accomplished a great deal, but they cannot do it without our support.

Mr. Lovald (Norway): Allow me to begin by expressing Norway's continuing support and full recognition of the achievements and the high standards of the International Criminal Tribunals for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, as reflected in the Tribunals' well-reasoned judgements and the annual reports before us. We would like to thank the Presidents of the Tribunals for their detailed and informative reports, which reflect the progress made during the period under review.

As we have consistently held, the work of the Tribunals contributes to bringing justice to the victims of the massive crimes that were committed. It will leave a legacy of international jurisprudence that can guide future courts, deter the future commission of those grave crimes and prevent impunity for potential perpetrators. As such, they are contributing to the development of international criminal justice and the fight against impunity for mass atrocities in general.

We commend both Tribunals for their commitment to meeting the completion strategy, while ensuring that due process standards and fundamental legal principles are fully respected.

According to the report of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, the Tribunal has concluded proceedings against 106 of the 161 who have been charged to date. For the first time in the Tribunal's history, the three Trial Chambers operated at full capacity and ran seven trials simultaneously, three of which involved 18 accused persons. In addition, the Appeals Chamber issued a record number of decisions, including 11 judgements in the past year, seven of which were in the past six months.

To date, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda has concluded proceedings against 33 accused persons. In addition, trials involving 22 accused in various cases are in progress. Eight detainees are awaiting trial. The Appeals Chamber has issued a large number of decisions, including four appeal judgements in respect of six persons.

The report of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda stresses that the success of the completion strategy will continue to depend on the assistance and cooperation of States. We fully agree. We appeal to all States to demonstrate — not just in words, but also in practice — their full cooperation with the Tribunals. As the work of the Tribunal nears completion, it is crucial that States give it their unreserved support. It is of the utmost importance that all States honour their financial commitments and pay their assessed contributions on time.

Furthermore, Member States must fulfil their obligation to arrest and transfer fugitives to the Tribunals without delay. We compliment the Prosecutors on their efforts to secure the arrest of the remaining fugitives, and we urge the States involved to cooperate fully with the Tribunals.

It is not acceptable that perpetrators of serious international crimes evade legal proceedings. The main mission of the Tribunals will not be fulfilled unless the highest-ranking indictees are brought to justice.

Norway has an agreement with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia regarding the enforcement of sentences and cooperates closely with the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in several fields. There is a pressing need for more States to enter into agreements regarding the enforcement of judgements. It is unreasonable that only a few Member States should shoulder that important responsibility.

We strongly support the Tribunals' external activities and their involvement and cooperation with local judiciaries. As stated in the report of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, an active engagement with local judiciaries will help to ensure that local courts have the capacity to continue the Tribunal's work in the future.

All States must honour their international obligation to cooperate with regard to requests for full and effective assistance to the Tribunals. That applies with regard to witnesses, financial and material support and practical assistance in the enforcement of sentences. All States should demonstrate their commitment to the Tribunals by means of active and concrete actions.

Norway will stand by its long-term commitment to the successful completion of the mandates assigned to the two Tribunals by the Security Council.

Mr. Jevremović (Serbia): At the outset, I would like to give my respects to the President of the International Criminal Court for the Former Yugoslavia, Judge Fausto Pocar. Special tribute should also go to the Chief Prosecutor, Mrs. Del Ponte, who is today reporting to the European Union ministers in Luxembourg. We highly appreciate their efforts and contributions to strengthening international law and moral standards in bringing to justice perpetrators of the most serious violations of humanitarian law and the law of the conduct of war in the tragic conflicts in the territory of the former Yugoslavia.

We welcome the recognition, in the report, of the cooperation by the relevant Serbian authorities with the Prosecutor's Office, and I can assure you that in the future that cooperation will be maintained and expanded. Only through joint efforts can we solve the

outstanding cases of apprehending the remaining fugitives, notably Ratko Mladić and others.

There were disagreements and objections by the Prosecutor's Office, particularly regarding the level of cooperation on the part of our relevant authorities. At some points, we were critical of the proceedings of the Tribunal. However, the contribution of the Tribunal is, overall, positive, and lasting and evident. Effectively prosecuting persons responsible for war crimes and bringing them to justice is an imperative and has been a prerequisite for the reconciliation process and for peaceful life in the territory of the former Yugoslavia. The only way to accomplish that is for every national community to disassociate itself, through the legal judiciary process, from the grave crimes that were committed in the past. That is an indispensable part of the process of joining in European integration and shared values.

Successful completion of our cooperation with the ICTY is one of the objectives of the Serbian Government, reflecting the general consensus that it is in Serbia's interest to take all requisite measures to complete that cooperation swiftly and effectively. There should be no doubt that we are committed to fulfilling our international obligations in that regard.

I would like to point out that, just a few days ago, the Serbian National Security Council decided to offer €1 million for information leading to the location and subsequent arrest of Ratko Mladić. As for the other Hague indictees, €250,000 is being offered for information concerning Stojan Zupljanin and Goran Hadzić.

We fully support the completion strategy of the ICTY, as defined in Security Council resolutions 1503 (2003) and 1534 (2004). The basic prerequisite for the success of the strategy is undoubtedly the capacity of domestic courts to process, in accordance with international legal standards, cases that have been transferred by the ICTY. The referral of the cases from the Tribunal to national jurisdictions has helped in many ways to achieve a full level of trust between the Governments of the Balkan region and international institutions. Similarly, the referral of such legal cases to national jurisdictions further facilitates full cooperation with the ICTY.

I can assure the Assembly that, as a result of substantial reforms, our national judiciary is now able to legally process the most complicated cases. Let me bring to the attention of Members that two important cases are currently being heard regarding crimes committed in Croatia and Kosovo: the notorious Ovcara case and the Suva Reka case, respectively.

The Prime Minister of Serbia, in a letter dated 25 July 2007, informed the Secretary-General of Serbia's intention to launch in the region an initiative to transfer persons convicted by the ICTY to the countries of their citizenship. Serbia has officially called upon the representatives of the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina and of the Government of Croatia to support that initiative.

We are all aware that there is no statute of limitation for war crimes, and national judiciaries, including that of Serbia, are obliged to process such cases in the future. International experience reminds us that bringing to justice those who have committed war crimes remains an enduring legal and moral obligation.

Mr. Nsengimana (Rwanda): I wish to thank Judge Dennis Byron, President of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), for presenting the twelfth annual report on the work of the Tribunal.

As we come towards the end of the mandate of the Tribunal, it becomes ever more critical for the United Nations to focus its attention on the legacy and residual issues of the Tribunal. Key among those issues are the court's documents and materials. The Government and the people of Rwanda would like those documents — which tell the story of our painful history — to be transferred after 2008 to Rwanda, where they could form an important basis for an international educational and research centre on genocide prevention. We look forward to an early decision in that regard by the Security Council, as well as to support from the international community aimed at the establishment of the centre.

While we welcome the Tribunal's training programmes for the Rwandan judiciary, those efforts must be accelerated significantly in view of the completion strategy. We therefore call upon the Tribunal to take further steps in that respect in collaboration with the Government. We also welcome the outreach activities, although much work remains to be done to disseminate information about the Tribunal's work to the areas and villages that were most affected by the genocide.

Rwanda has welcomed the transfer of cases to national jurisdictions, principally Rwanda. Significant progress has been made with respect to the referral of cases. The Rwanda Government is committed to continuing its preparations to that end. An organic law has been promulgated to govern all legal matters pertaining to the referral of cases to Rwanda. Other arrangements have been undertaken to ensure that all the requirements outlined under rule 11 bis are met. Our partnership with the Office of the Prosecutor has enabled us to make significant progress in these areas.

Rwanda has stated many times, before the General Assembly and the Security Council, that the transfer of cases to our country is essential, so that justice is seen to be done where the crimes have been committed. It would also complement and reinforce ongoing Government policies aimed at reconciliation, which is central to the mandate of the ICTR. In addition, in practical terms, holding the trials would be less costly and more efficient, since the evidence and the witnesses are mostly within the country.

The death penalty is no longer an issue of concern with respect to the transfer of trials, since the Rwandan parliament recently adopted legislation abolishing that practice.

Of equal importance is the question of transferring convicts to serve sentences in Rwanda. We believe that ICTR convicts must serve their sentences in Rwanda, where they committed the crimes and where they should be seen serving their sentences. Continued delay in this area is causing substantial damage to the process and to the reputation of the ICTR. We urge those concerned to take urgent measures to remedy that situation.

Rwanda appreciates the efforts made by the German authorities in apprehending Augustin Ngirabatware on 17 September 2007.

However, on the issue of fugitives still at large, particularly Félicien Kabuga and other key masterminds of the genocide, we once again appeal to Member States to work closely with one another to ensure that these indictees do not escape justice. The completion strategy is not an exit strategy for our collective commitment to bring to justice the authors and planners of the genocide. There is fairly good information about the whereabouts of many of the fugitives, but there is still little progress in arresting them. We believe that measures should be undertaken to ensure that all States cooperate in apprehending and handing over these fugitives for trial and that those that fail to do so are brought to account.

I would like to conclude by expressing our profound appreciation to the international community and to specific countries for their continued support of the Tribunal through both assessed and voluntary contributions. As we enter the last leg of the Tribunal's work, we urge Member States to continue their commitment to ensuring that the Tribunal is adequately resourced to conduct its work efficiently and effectively through the full, timely and unconditional disbursement of assessed contributions.

We also thank the Tribunal President and his team for their work in ensuring the implementation of the completion strategy.

Mr. Prica (Bosnia and Herzegovina): At the outset, I would like to thank the President of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991, Judge Fausto Pocar, for the fourteenth annual report of the Tribunal (A/62/172). The Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina has studied the report by the President of the Tribunal with due attention.

Allow me to express our appreciation for the Tribunal's recognition of the efforts made by the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina at all levels in order to achieve satisfactory cooperation with the Tribunal, especially at the operational level. I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate my country's firm commitment to continued full cooperation with the Tribunal, a commitment confirmed and proved by the extensive efforts and additional measures undertaken on the ground aimed at targeting fugitive support networks, thus further diminishing the manoeuvring space for those indictees who remain at large.

It is very important to mention the cooperation between the War Crimes Chamber of the State Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, established in March 2005, and the Office of the State Prosecutor of Bosnia and Herzegovina. That cooperation has made significant progress in processing a number of war crimes cases, five of which have been transferred from the Tribunal. We are very pleased to find very positive remarks in

paragraph 86 of the report regarding the activities of our aforementioned national judiciary bodies.

Bosnia and Herzegovina will continue to support the work of the Tribunal and to fully cooperate with the Office of the Prosecutor. Bosnia and Herzegovina is of the position that the Tribunal should continue its work until the trials of all persons indicted for war crimes are completed by the Tribunal, especially the cases of Radovan Karadzić and Ratko Mladić, who are still at large.

Mr. Sangqu (South Africa): My delegation wishes to thank Judge Pocar of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and Judge Byron of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda for their statements presenting the respective reports of the Tribunals.

My delegation commends the Tribunals for the steps they are taking to ensure that they achieve their completion strategies. In particular, we welcome the measures taken to increase the efficiency of the Tribunals in processing trials by holding a high number of trials simultaneously, making amendments to the rules of procedure for the purpose of expediting proceedings and making optimal use of ad litem judges.

The completion strategies are time-bound, and therefore, notwithstanding the steps that the Tribunals are taking to increase efficiency, there are cases that, due to the passage of time and an inability to effect arrests, will have to be referred to national jurisdictions. Therefore, referrals to national jurisdictions are central to achieving the completion strategies, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1534 (2004). To that end, we commend the various countries that have accepted cases from the Tribunals. We are, however, particularly keen to see the countries where the crimes were committed assume the responsibility of accepting referrals from the Tribunals. We therefore welcome all efforts to provide technical assistance to those countries, to enable them to reform their justice and prison systems to absorb the cases from the Tribunals. We strongly believe that justice sector reform is a critical element of post-conflict reconstruction and that it contributes to security sector reform.

In the case of both Tribunals, there are indicted persons still at large, and some of them are particularly high-level accused or are alleged to have committed crimes that should be dealt with at an international level. It is important that those fugitives ultimately be brought to justice, and we call for full cooperation with the Tribunals to arrest them and surrender them for trial. My delegation calls for cooperation between States and the two Tribunals.

The fact that the Tribunals are working towards completing their work means that we must ensure that they continue to receive sufficient resources to enable them to complete their work and their mandates. As States, we must continue to extend cooperation with respect to travel of witnesses; the pursuit and bringing to justice of fugitives; the arrest and transfer of accused; and the resettlement of individuals who are acquitted by the Tribunals.

Furthermore, we need to address the issue of the legacy that will be left by the Tribunals and ensure that we preserve their achievements. The Tribunals were established by the Security Council, consistent with its responsibility to maintain international peace and security. Therefore, as we consider their legacy and achievements, we must measure them by the extent of their contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security.

It has been said that there can be no peace without justice. We believe the Tribunals have immensely contributed to stability and peace, both in Rwanda and in the former Yugoslavia. There will, however, continue to be ongoing work to consolidate those achievements and to ensure the preservation of the legacy of the Tribunals. That work includes ensuring that the passage of time does not result in impunity for any fugitives. It is important that the archives of the Tribunals be preserved and stored in places where future generations can have access to them and can take lesson from the work of both Tribunals.

Mr. Kuzmin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank the leadership of both Tribunals for their annual reports on the work of those bodies.

We note the active work of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in the last year. We welcome the transfer of the cases of those accused by the Tribunal to national judicial bodies, which, we believe, will ensure the timely implementation of the completion strategy within Security Council deadlines. In that regard, we believe that it is important to step up efforts to develop the Rwandan judicial system,

including strengthening its capabilities for the judicial prosecution of individuals whose cases have been transferred to it by the Tribunal.

The International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia has also achieved a certain acceleration and enhancement in the effectiveness of its adjudication in the last year, in particular by introducing amendments to its rules of procedure and evidence. We note the arrest and transfer to the Tribunal of Zdravko Tolimir and Vlastimir Dordevič, which we hope will also serve as a positive element for the timely completion of the Tribunal's work. We believe that more active efforts should be devoted to transferring the cases of the accused for consideration by the courts of States of the former Yugoslavia. We note the Tribunal's work on protecting witnesses for Tribunal cases. We call on other international bodies to assist the Tribunal in that task.

The Russian Federation maintains its position of principle that the work of both Tribunals should be completed within the completion strategy time frame. It is our view that the fact that the Tribunals do not have Félicien Kabuga, Ratko Mladić, Radovan Karadžić or other accused cannot be considered as justification for an unlimited extension of the work of those bodies.

We believe that at this stage, the substantively final phase of the work of the Tribunals, they should focus a portion of their efforts on thinking through the options for settling the organizational aspects of completing their work, including, in particular, maintaining the archives and judges' pensions. It is our view that that process will be effective and will in fact provide for the timely resolution of current Tribunal tasks without engaging in additional financial expenditures for United Nations Member States.

Mr. Ehouzou (Benin): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the African Group. The African Group is grateful to you, Mr. President, for convening this joint debate on the reports of the two International Criminal Tribunals established for the prosecution of persons responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in Rwanda and neighbouring States and in the territory of the former Yugoslavia.

We thank the Presidents and Prosecutors of the two Tribunals for the comprehensive reports that they have presented on the ongoing activities of the two Tribunals in the discharge of their respective mandates and for their invaluable contribution to the fight against impunity for serious violations of international humanitarian law. The increased efficiency demonstrated by the two Tribunals is a clear testimony to their commitment to the cause of international restorative justice and to their completion strategy.

The African Group considers that the progress achieved in the implementation of their completion strategies was made possible owing to the following major factors: the efficiency displayed by the Tribunals' leadership in adjusting their mandate by focusing on the prosecution and trial of the most senior leaders suspected of being most responsible for crimes within their area of jurisdiction; the transferring of cases involving persons of lower- to mid-levels of responsibility to national jurisdictions in accordance with the completion strategy endorsed by the Security Council in its resolution 1503 (2003); the cooperation of Members States, be it in the form of efforts to localize, arrest and transfer the indictees to the Tribunals, in protecting witness, in hosting persons serving their sentences, or in organizing the prosecution of cases referred to their national jurisdiction; and the generous contributions of Member States and donors who have financially supported the activities of the Tribunals in their core elements but also in elements funded with voluntary contributions as Outreach Programmes. In that respect, the work of the International Tribunals constitutes an historical example of multilateral cooperation for the administration of international justice and for the enforcement of international law.

The African Group expresses its high appreciation to all Member States that are supporting the activities of the Tribunals, and urge those concerned to give the full desired support and assistance to the Tribunals for the arrest and transfer of the remaining fugitives in order to enable the Tribunals to fulfil their mandate according to their completion strategy.

The African Group calls upon the Governments with which the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda is currently conducting negotiations for the referral of cases to their national jurisdictions to cooperate actively with the Tribunal. The African Group welcomes the dedication shown by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights in offering to monitor all cases transferred to African countries.

The African Group urges the international community to assist the African countries who accept to host persons serving their sentences to improve their penitentiary facilities.

The proceedings of the two International Tribunals demonstrate the strong resolve of the international community to strengthen the rule of law in the regions affected by mass atrocities. The African Group welcomes the efforts undertaken through training and assistance for the development of domestic jurisdictions. They are of utmost importance for the legacy of the Tribunals as regards their jurisprudence, which will inevitably not only enrich the law practice in the regions concerned, but are also of great value for the international judicial practice as a whole.

The African Group further welcomes the steps undertaken by the two Tribunals to efficiently manage their archives, especially the project initiated for the preparation and organization of the Tribunals' records with the goal of meeting future preservation and access requirements.

In conclusion, the African Group encourages the two International Tribunals to maintain the dynamic of their activities in order to bring justice to the victims. Only thus can they achieve their rightful aspiration to legitimacy to the greatest extent possible, and also further the promotion of national reconciliation and lasting peace in the countries concerned, as well as contribute to the enhancement of the authority of international humanitarian law as a paramount pillar of human dignity.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on these agenda items. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda items 74 and 75?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.